DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 099 EA 023 445

AUTHOR Genck, Fredric H.; Klingenberg, Allen J.
TITLE Effective Schools through Effective Management. The School Board's Responsibility. Revised Edition.
INSTITUTION Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-880331-00-4
PUB DATE Jul 91
NOTE 254p.; For 1978 edition, see ED 165 273.
AVAILABLE FROM Illinois Association of School Boards, 1209 South 5th Street, Springfield, IL 62703 ($11.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Board Administrator Relationship; *Board of Education Role; Collective Bargaining; Decision Making; Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership Training; Management Teams; Personnel Evaluation; Public Schools; Questionnaires; *School Administration; *School Effectiveness; School Organization; *Superintendents

ABSTRACT

The management principles set forth in this handbook encourage broad public and employee involvement. The first of three sections, "Management in Education," looks at the current state of the art, the potential benefits of sound management, and what school boards can do to encourage development of a true management process for their districts. The second, "Elements of Management," offers both basic principles and specific examples of what makes for good management. Topics are as follows: getting organized to manage, building a management team, planning, gathering information for decision-making, setting performance appraisal in motion, selecting and developing teachers, paying for performance, and improving public and employee relations. The third, "School Boards on the Job," examines some practical realities that make schools different from other organizations, the nature of school boards, and the role of the superintendent. New to this edition is an appendix of leadership tools consisting of short articles produced by the staff of the Illinois Association of School Boards that concern the board-superintendent relationship, a value system for schools, delegation and decision making, and monitoring and asessing performance (accountability). (MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 340069

The IASB Classic, introducing now-proven principles of management for results, has been up-dated for the 1990s and equipped with a new Appendix of Leadership Tools for the School Board and Superintendent.

The School Board's Responsibilities

Effective Schools Through Effective Management

Illinois Association of School Boards

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fredric H. Genck
Allen J. Klingenberg

EA 023 445

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gerald R. Glass

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The School Board's
Responsibility:

Effective Schools Through Effective Management

By Fredric H. Genck and
Allen J. Klingenberg

Illinois Association of School Boards
1209 South Fifth Street
Springfield, Illinois 62703

"In the final analysis, the success of the school board, superintendent, and management team depends upon their ability to make the work of the teacher in the classroom more effective."

Page xv

Original edition: August, 1978
Revised edition: July, 1991

ISBN 1-880331-00-4

Copyright© 1991 by the Illinois Association of School Boards and Fredric H. Genck and Allen J. Klingenberg. All rights reserved.

Foreword to the 1991 Edition:

Democracy without bureaucracy

By Wayne L. Sampson, Executive Director
Illinois Association of School Boards

Is it presumptuous to call a thirteen-year-old book a *classic*?

Probably. But the temptation is irresistible. If we judge a book by the manner in which history reveals its truth, *Effective Schools Through Effective Management* is truly a classic.

When Fredric Genck and Allen Klingenberg wrote this remarkable book in 1978, they did more than anticipate a generation of school reform. They paved the way for "democracy without bureaucracy" and proved that community control and professional leadership are not mutually exclusive.

Engaged in their own separate pursuits, both Genck and Klingenberg saw the tidal wave building long before *A Nation at Risk* was published. In fact, it can be argued that the current school reform movement dates, not from *A Nation at Risk* in 1982, but from *Effective Schools* in 1978.

Klingenberg led his Lake Forest school board on a mission-building venture in the mid-1970's to refocus the district on matters of concern to parents, students and teachers. Genck watched the re-structuring of corporate America and wondered how long our bloated public institutions could resist change. Together they articulated an approach to school governance and management that works wherever it is tried.

The management principles set out in *Effective*

Schools work because they foster democratic governance without fostering bureaucracy.

Bureaucracy is an organization's response to excessive democracy. While a public school district depends upon democratic principles of government for its existence, even a school district can get too much of a good thing. Because bureaucracy insulates people inside the organization against excessive intrusion from people on the outside— including both clients and policy makers— reform from the top down doesn't work. Typical attempts to reduce bureaucratic obstacles to school reform by giving parents and taxpayers greater control simply stiffen resistance to change and create the opposite effect of what's intended.

Small wonder that the classroom and the board room often seem so far apart. Policy and practice exist in separate worlds.

The management principles that Genck and Klingenberg set forth in *Effective Schools*, on the other hand, encourage the organization to work in harmony with constituents and policy makers. If the role of management is to ensure the best possible outcomes, then for public institutions the desired outcomes must be sanctioned by the public.

Genck and Klingenberg recognize that the outcomes of greatest importance to teachers, parents, and pupils also are of greatest importance to school boards, taxpayers and state legislators: student achievement, school climate, and financial stability. Thus, they set the stage for strategic planning, site-based management and other management concepts that demand broad public and employee involvement. Management goals, they imply, must be based on a vision or on the values and beliefs of the publics to whom the schools are accountable.

Successfully linking pupils, parents and teachers to

high performance standards, however, is impossible without eliminating bureaucratic methods. Linking schools to high performance standards set by school boards is impossible without a finely-tuned balance between authority and accountability.

Though Genck and Klingenberg make accountability a major element of their approach to management, they quickly part company with the broader accountability movement. For most school boards and lawmakers, accountability means hands-on control—directing, coordinating, assessing, controlling. The authors see this as more of the same disease that has ailed public education for the past 50 years—more of the wrong kind of democracy that produces more bureaucracy and more failure.

Accountability that links people and performance, they contend, consists of setting standards, authorizing employees to do their jobs, and holding the institution responsible for results. Democracy without bureaucracy, in other words.

Effective Schools Through Effective Management combines the bottom-line mentality expected of schools today with a prominent role for the community's elected representatives. As a battle plan for the survival of community control, the book calls on school boards to get their hands out of the day-to-day management of schools and get back to school governance—a move designed to extend democracy and curtail bureaucracy in public education.

A great deal has happened to the world and to the schools of America since 1978 when *Effective Schools Through Effective Management* was first published. And virtually everything that has happened in the arena of school management was foretold in this amazing book. The book predicted the emphasis on increasing the professionalism of teachers and administrators

and holding them accountable for results.

Allen Klingenberg and Fredric Genck may not have been the first to call for a renewed emphasis on management in our schools—but with this book, I think, they set forth the need more clearly than anyone before them. And they were surely the first to show us how.

It is no accident that the effective schools of America, in one way or another, reflect the fundamental principles that Genck and Klingenberg first enunciated in these pages.

It is surely no accident that the number of school districts adopting these principles has grown by leaps and bounds since 1978. As a private consultant, Fred Genck alone has worked with nearly 200 school districts since then and produced a number of new publications further demonstrating the wisdom of *Effective Schools.*

Successful case histories abound, many of them described in a series of reports that Genck published in the middle 1980's. All of them add new detail to the original principles explained in this book.

Allen Klingenberg, too, has found success in his own ideas and words. Lake Forest District 67 has become a mecca for people interested in effective school management. Between 1985 and 1990, the district hosted more than two thousand visitors from all over the nation and as far away as Australia. Small wonder. The six-school elementary district was the original proving ground for the management principles set forth in *Effective Schools.*

And the results? All five of the district's eligible schools have received awards of excellence from the U.S. Department of Education. Five teachers have won Kohl International Teaching Awards—akin to winning the Heisman Trophy in football. District 67 is also one of only 120 school districts in the nation to receive the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Planning from the International Association of School Business Officials—

and did so for nine years running!

Klingenberg himself has been selected as Illinois Superintendent of the Year and recognized by *Executive Educator* magazine as one of the one hundred outstanding school administrators in the nation.

One is tempted to conclude that *Effective Schools* spawned the emphasis on participatory management, professionalism, and results-orientation in today's public schools. If it didn't spawn these reforms, the book certainly foretold them. Literally dozens and dozens of school boards and administrators are getting results, some by adapting the entire approach to management espoused by the authors, some by using parts of it, such as the performance measures, the fiscal planning procedures, or the emphasis on teacher and parent involvement.

The Illinois Association of School Boards is proud to present this 1991 reprinting of *Effective School Through Effective Management*. Readers of the original edition will find no substantive changes in the text; history has made revision unnecessary.

We have, however, added an appendix of leadership tools that readers will find useful. The appendix will help the school board and superintendent establish a relationship that makes delegation and accountability possible. Without this essential first step, there can be no meaningful change in how a school system is managed and, therefore, no planned improvement in teaching and learning.

The superintendent must have the freedom to function as a leader, free of personal and political considerations. The school board must be comfortable in the knowledge that school goals are community goals and that the schools are, indeed, progressing toward those goals.

That is what this book is all about.

Acknowledgements for the 1978 edition . . . .

Both the authors and the publisher are deeply indebted to a number of people for help in planning this book and for constructively criticizing early drafts.

First, there were three experienced and dedicated school board members who reviewed the first draft of this book and responded at length. Their assistance went a long way toward putting school management into perspective for lay board members. A great deal of thanks is due, therefore, to:

Edward C. Epstein, of Park Forest, a past president of the Illinois Association of School Boards and former member of the Crete-Monee C.U. District 201U Board of Education;

Virgil L. Johnson, of Carlock, former member of the Olympia C.U. District 16 Board of Education and former IASB director and vice president;

Donna Werner, member of the Macomb C.U. District 185 Board of Education.

Gratitude also is due Ms. Pat Russell, a Chicago freelance writer who helped the authors organize and articulate their ideas, and to Peter W. Warner, whose management consulting firm bears his name and whose timely insights into effective management practices were invaluable.

Finally, the authors wish to recognize the contributions of the IASB staff throughout the preparation of this book, from guidance in the early planning through final editing and production.

Foreword to the 1978 edition . . . .

The only way that school boards can favorably influence education in their schools is by ensuring that resources are properly managed. They cannot do the managing themselves any more than they can do the teaching—or the bus driving, or the cooking, or the repairing of buildings.

The question that plagues all school board members is, "How do we who meet a few hours each month satisfy ourselves and our constituents that the schools are properly managed and that children are satisfactorily learning?" The answer to this perplexing question lies in effective management policies—in being sure that employees know what their jobs are and that they are making every effort to fulfill them.

Clearly, school boards cannot go into the classroom and direct the teachers and students—at least they shouldn't. Nor can they stand around the business office to be sure the work is going smoothly or lurk about the boiler room in search of wasteful practices.

But school boards can set goals and standards and they can be sure that personnel and material resources are being used in the best possible way as measured by those goals and standards.

That is what this book is about. It explains a management process which links school board goals and standards with staff performance and resource allocation. This book shows the school board how to close the gap between school board policies and classroom performance.

August, 1978

Contents

v **Democracy without bureaucracy**
xv **Introduction**

MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

3 **1 / Are school boards doing the job?**
How effective management can help • Education's changing scene • Where boards fit in management • What does management cost?

11 **2 / Guiding people toward results**
Linking board and staff • Linking district and consumers • Linking people and performance

25 **3 / What education management is not**
Educational administration • Systems management • Business management • Management by objectives • Program planning and budgeting systems • Industrial management

32 **4 / A management role for school boards**
Monitoring results • Developing staff talent • A statement of purpose • Balancing costs and benefits • Developing management

ELEMENTS OF MANAGEMENT

47 **5 / Getting organized to manage**
The management plan • The management process

59 **6 / Building a management team**
What is a chief executive? • Staffing the central office • The principal as manager

67 **7 / Planning**
Educational planning • Understanding district performance • Understanding community needs • Setting goals and objectives • Planning finances and facilities • Projecting enrollment • Analyzing

facility needs • Keeping track of funds • Budgeting • Linking plans to performance

83 **8 / Information for decision making**
School board information • Consumer and staff opinions • Student educational performance • Personnel information • Financial and budgeting information

115 **9 / Setting performance appraisal in motion**
Evaluating district performance • Staff concerns • Why evaluate performance? • Principles of evaluation • Components of evaluation • Getting evaluation started • The outside evaluator • Appraising staff performance • Ingredients of appraisal • One district's approach

133 **10 / The selection and development of teachers**
Getting good teachers • Appraising teacher performance • Performance review groups • Staff development • Principles of compensation

143 **11 / Paying for performance**
Arriving at management salaries • Teacher compensation • Service personnel

151 **12 / Public and employee relations—some management challenges**
What communication is • Designing a communications program • Whose responsibility? • Measuring community attitudes • Sources of information and assistance • The rise of unions in education • Impact on performance • The board's role in bargaining • Who should bargain for the board? • Avoiding the union • Effective employee relations • Further reading

SCHOOL BOARDS ON THE JOB

169 **13 / Working with the superintendent**
Some common problems • Development of the su-

continued

perintendency • How to improve the relationship

176 **14 / Getting the right superintendent**

182 **15 / Appraising the superintendent's performance**

186 **16 / How effective is board performance?**
Key relationships • Performance at meetings • Self-improvement • Board meetings that work • Executive sessions • School board images

200 **17 / The new board member—how to cope**
Before the meeting • During the meeting • After the meeting

205 **In summary**

LEADERSHIP TOOLS APPENDIX

209 **Effective schools and the board-superintendent relationship**
Professional integrity v. public control • Power—hoarded or delegated • School board service • Leadership tools

214 **A value system for your schools**
Visionary leadership • Citizens committees • Surveys • Focus groups

224 **Delegation and decision making**
The elements of a decision • The impact of poor decision making • The impact of good decision making • How to encourage good decision making • Who should decide and be held accountable? • Whose decision—getting the board and superintendent to agree

232 **Accountability—monitoring and assessing performance**
Evaluating the superintendent • Monitoring district performance • What information do we need or want?

Introduction

School boards and school managers are called upon to improve the performance of their institutions in the face of immense difficulties both within and without.

No simple, single, or short-term solution can solve these problems. But the situation is not hopeless. The thesis of this book is that the development of management—in district, school, and classroom; by the board, the management team, and the teachers—can set schools on a course that will bring about a dramatic improvement in education by ensuring that school performance produces learning and satisfies consumers.

This book is written with a sympathetic view of the problems facing education, a view based on the active participation of both authors in the practice of management in education. In particular, the authors appreciate the work that school boards, superintendents, and their staffs are doing under difficult circumstances.

Though intended primarily for school board members, this book also may help superintendents, other members of management teams, and teachers. An effective and productive relationship between board and superintendent is critically important, even though circumstances make it increasingly difficult to achieve. Education is built upon the teachers, and the pressures and problems upon this profession also are severe. In the final analysis, the success of the school board, superintendent, and management team depends upon their ability to make the work of the teacher in the classroom more effective. All of these people—board members, managers, and teachers—are under public scrutiny as never before. It is ultimately upon them that the community, parents, and children must depend for high quality education in our country.

There is no single style of management that is best for every school district; the ideas presented in this book represent a starting point for the analysis and interpretation required in each district. Management is in an early stage of development and application in education. Hopefully, the concepts set forth in this book will be improved upon by many school districts in the years ahead.

Fredric H. Genck
Allen J. Klingenberg
August, 1978

Management
in education

"Board members need a broader understanding of management as a total process and how to go about realizing the rewards that good management offers. Management is not a bag of tricks; nor is it an illusive or newfangled concept. Management is the process of making an organization purposeful and effective; it involves selecting, appraising, and developing people and linking them in their jobs in a way that enables an organization to achieve desired results."

Page 3

1 /Are school boards doing the job?

Members of school boards are concerned citizens who see that every child gets the best education possible. They promised that, in effect, when they took the job.

But do boards really have control over pupil learning in their districts? Probably not. In fact, most boards have only limited information about how well students are learning. Consequently, the effectiveness of school boards is being questioned—a parent wants to know why his child isn't reading at grade level; another wants to know how district-wide achievement compares to that of a neighboring district. Boards are scrambling for answers to these and other challenges.

The pressures on boards from within are increasing, too—the teachers union wants to add dental care to its benefits package; the budget this year is smaller than last year's because of an enrollment decline. How does the board decide how to spend available funds in the best interests of the children it serves?

A well-planned and well-executed system for gathering and reporting information, channeled through the superintendent, supposedly gives board members what they need to know to make intelligent decisions. But do most districts, in fact, have a process that provides the board with the information it needs to do its job?

The need for management that ensures the effectiveness of school districts should be apparent. The application of individual management techniques, such as program budgeting or management by objectives, won't help by themselves. Board members need a broader understanding of management as a total process and how to go about realizing the rewards that good manage-

ment offers. Management is not a bag of tricks; nor is it an illusive or new-fangled concept. Briefly defined:

> *Management is the process of making an organization purposeful and effective; it involves selecting, appraising, and developing people and linking them in their jobs in a way that enables an organization to achieve desired results.*

How effective management can help

Only through an effective management process can school boards see that children get a good education and that money is spent wisely. Effective management also is the only way that boards can prove to citizens and state lawmakers that the schools are doing a good job. It provides the superintendent and other managers with the skills, talents, and methods required to exercise management responsibility for the district, and contributes to an effective working relationship between the superintendent and board as they carry out their joint and separate managerial responsibilities.

The pressures mentioned earlier and the lack of good communication strain the relationship between boards and superintendents in many school districts today. A better mutual understanding and application of management functions can relieve the pressures for improved educational performance. Just as the board and the superintendent need to establish an effective relationship, so must the management team have a constructive relationship with the teaching staff.* The management team in education is effective to the extent that it contributes to teacher effectiveness in achieving student learning and development. Enhancement of the pupil-teacher relationship is the only reason for the existence of management, and, in the final analysis, the

* The management team referred to throughout this book, consists of the superintendent, central office assistants, principals, their assistants, and department heads.

only measure of its success.

Management at its best enables school districts to select, develop, direct, and appraise teachers effectively. Management increases the ability of schools to deliver the desired results. Because the most valuable resource school districts have is people, their competence is crucial. Increasing each teacher's capability to achieve excellence in teaching should be the aim of every school board and school administrator. Policies, evaluation systems, and procedures that increase student learning and promote healthy working relationships represent the school board's management domain.

Well-developed management also enables boards to identify strengths and weaknesses in educational performance and to make needed improvements. The results of basic education (reading, arithmetic, etc.) are the easiest to measure and usually the highest concern of the community. Only with specific information on student performance can teachers, managers, and board members evaluate the district's programs and prove they are meeting their responsibilities. In a field as creative, personal, and humanistic as education, the measuring of performance is unusually difficult. The emphasis on learning results nevertheless is essential. The obstacles to measuring performance should spur greater effort, not justify a failure to try.

Effective school district management leads to improved relationships with the public-at-large and in particular with the district's consumers—parents and students.

Those who pay the bill for education are entitled to have their schools pursue goals that are desired by the community and to operate within available resources. And, just as surely, they deserve evidence of accomplishment. If anyone doubts the importance of a district's demonstrating educational results today, let him be ad-

vised of the increasing number of parents and students who take legal action against school people for failing to educate children adequately.

Good management underlies the success of organizations of all kinds. Why haven't school districts progressed further in their use of it? If management is just beginning to develop in education, why now?

Education's changing scene

In the past, school districts typically were under the control of a long-term superintendent who was likely to be authoritarian and patriarchal in image and practice. His stature in the community, personal leadership qualities, and the respect accorded his educational experience and academic credentials enabled him to run the district largely according to his own desires—at least so long as he met community moral and ethical standards. He satisfied both the school board and the community without pressure to document his success. Typically he dealt with a conservative board of leading citizens who more often than not were unified in their ideas of what education should be and were able to provide both stability and experience.

Teacher groups at the time were organized around professional goals and made little effort to dispute the superintendent or the board. The personal commitment of teachers was primarily to teaching and minimally on improving their financial and working conditions. The community generally was passive in its relationship with the schools. The board and the superintendent had wide latitude in deciding how to run the school.

In the 1950's, education entered a period of enrollment growth that strained school financial resources to the fullest. The dollars involved in providing more buildings, staff members, and learning materials thrust education into the big business arena. It was not until the early 1970's that declining enrollment began to ease

the demands for new facilities and expanded staffs in most districts.

The superintendent today operates under new and more intense pressures. No longer the captain of his own ship, he increasingly is buffeted by pressures from parents, demands from teachers, and criticism from the public and the press—all often seeking conflicting goals.

Boards are changing in composition and attitude. Members bring more diverse experiences and viewpoints to board meetings today; increasingly they represent special interests. A substantially larger proportion of women and members of minority groups serve on school boards. Board members also serve for fewer years. Perhaps most important, school boards have become more aggressive. Stimulated by the national and state associations and journals, they view their role as more oriented to educational performance, taking a lesson from the inadequacies of school district operation in the past.

Unionization of teachers probably has had the most dramatic impact on the need for management in education. Teacher unions today demand input into the decision-making process of running a district. (Often the demand amounts to less work for more pay.) It is interesting to note that the development of professional management in business and industry also occurred in tandem with unionization.

The public is no longer compliant. Generally its attitude reflects criticism, concern, and demands for change, rather than support. The public knows that test scores of college-bound students have been getting lower, as have standardized achievement test scores in the elementary schools. While the causes are yet to be fully understood, low achievement test scores add to the public's concern about education programs and provide ammunition for any person or group that seeks to at-

tack the current system, muckrakers and internal dissidents included.

As industry did many years ago, education is turning to a new management philosophy to deal with financial, public, and employee pressures.

Where boards fit in management

To understand the relevance of management to education, board members first must grasp this basic definition of management: *Management is the entire process of making an organization purposeful, competent, and effective through people, so that the organization's purposes and expected results are achieved.* A breakdown of the management definition reveals three main parts:

1) **People**—their selection, organization, development, appraisal, and compensation;

2) **Responsibility for performance** in light of purposes and goals;

3) **The process** that links people and performance.

These components are present in the management of any organization.

In education the basic meaning of management is operating the district—it is the word for what boards, superintendents, and other administrators always have done. But education management today must be thought of—actually re-thought of—as the total process of operating the district in a way that achieves results in the public interest. Only the entire process truly can be called management. Administration is but one part of it.

Board members know that most districts don't measure up to the broad definition of management—particularly the part emphasizing performance. Educational results, which is what schools are all about, receives scant attention from most boards and superintendents.

School board members, of course, cannot manage a district by themselves. The board meets only a few hours a month; the job of management (and the job of developing it) is full-time. While the board must establish the climate for better management and practice its disciplines, the task of making it work rests with the management team.

Board members, however, should understand all the elements of management and help the management team develop a process relevant to each school district's needs. Specifically, a school board must learn:

1) How to evaluate district performance and give effective guidance to the superintendent;

2) How to establish an effective relationship with the superintendent, management team as a whole, teachers, students, and parents;

3) How to obtain and use information about the school system without interfering in day-to-day operations;

4) How to ensure, through planning and appraisal, that the district meets the educational aspirations of the community and the legal requirements of the state;

5) How to encourage development of an organization that attracts capable staff members and makes best use of their talents;

6) How to establish personnel policies which ensure high motivation, effort, and results from both managers and teachers.

What does management cost?

The question "What does it cost?" is easily answered for a new gymnasium or contract proposal, but it cannot be answered easily for improving management. The decision to strengthen management in school districts is an act of faith based upon sound reasoning and judgment.

Generally, however, the development of management as a total process does not increase costs. It merely redirects the time and energies of the staff toward more productive activities and away from less important matters. Good management, in fact, can reduce some direct costs. A well-managed organization normally has fewer people than one not well-managed. Therefore, while the possibility of a cost increase in the early phases of management development should not be ruled out, improved management generally reduces costs at the same time it improves learning results.

A cost of another kind may occur—in the training of people in the organization—during the development of management. New programs of organization, evaluation, and compensation are likely to be needed. Once the period of adjustment is over, the district should enter a period of stabilized operation with benefits to all from increased productivity.

In short, management is the means for school boards to fulfill their responsibility for district performance on behalf of the public.

2/Guiding people toward results

Every organization needs good management if its performance is to satisfy owners and consumers. That is not to say that management is a standardized set of procedures—one package for all organizations. But the basic concept of management and its functions are the same for all organizations:

1) Management deals with people. The number of people involved, the nature of their work, and the purposes toward which their activities are directed will not be the same for any two organizations. However, management always makes its primary contribution to society through people—their selection, appraisal, development, and compensation.

2) Management includes responsibility for performance. The activities of planning, information gathering, and evaluation ensure that the organization's goals are achieved.

3) Management consists of certain functions—a process—that link people and performance: organization, analysis, decision making, communication, and relationships.

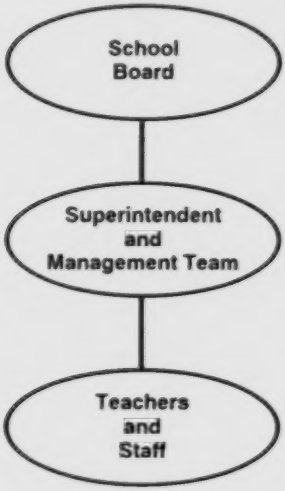
In education, management can be further defined as the linkage in three broad areas: between school board and staff, between the district and its consumers, and between people and performance.

Linking board and staff

Figure 1 shows a basic concept of management applied to education: the linkage in the district between

the school board and the staff. The board gives over-all direction and control to the district. It ensures that goals are established, staff competence is developed, and educational results are achieved in accord with the needs and desires of the community. To fulfill their fundamental responsibilities, boards must monitor educational performance; to do that they need information on teaching success—or lack of it—with students.

Figure 1—Basic Concept of School District Management Linking Board and Staff



Under the leadership and direction of the superintendent, the management team runs the school district, with guidance from the board. The management team provides recommendations to the board and supplies supporting documentation in every area of board

decision-making. The relationship between the board and the management team must be one of mutual interdependence and understanding. The board depends on the management team to operate the district effectively within the confines of district purposes, goals, and board policies; the management team depends on the board to establish performance standards, as well as for trust and support.

The relationship between the management team and teachers is as important as that between the board and the management team. Because student learning and development represent the vital functions of an educational institution, management must be judged by the extent to which it contributes to teacher effectiveness in achieving learning results.

The individual classroom teacher is the heart of the school system; all activities must be relevant and useful to teacher performance. Teacher interests and concerns should be reflected in most management decisions, because teacher competence is the school's major resource. Teacher morale and motivation are vital factors in the effectiveness of the district. At the same time, the board and the management team must have sufficient control and power to ensure that the teaching staff serves the interests of the public.

Though the superintendent and the management team represent the managers of a school district, boards and teachers have management responsibilities, too. The following outline summarizes the main management responsibilities of each group:

SCHOOL BOARD

Establishes liaison with community

Oversees educational facilities and financial planning

Sets purposes and objectives

Establishes policies

Reviews performance

Seeks out and considers recommendations from management

Evaluates the district and the superintendent

SUPERINTENDENT AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Maintains community relations

Prepares facility and financial plans

Implements policies, objectives, and programs

Directs the organization

Selects, evaluates, and develops personnel

Measures performance and reports results

Develops recommendations and information for the school board

TEACHER

Maintains student, parent and faculty relationships

Manages the classroom

Plans student objectives

Implements teaching strategies

Monitors student performance

Note that the board and the management team share some areas of responsibility. There is a difference, however, in their roles or obligations. For example, in *establishing liaison with the community*, the board represents the values and aims of the community in planning activities and making decisions. The board advises the community that its views are recognized and reports to the community on the operation of the district through such communication channels as newsletters, press releases, annual reports, and so forth. In *maintaining community relations*, the superintendent and the management team involve citizens (especially parents of students) and keep them informed on what is taking

place in the schools. The management team must understand community attitudes and opinions, but does not take direction that is outside board policy.

Another area of shared responsibility is performance. In *reviewing performance*, the board is responsible for periodic review of district performance, which requires proper criteria for measurement. In *measuring performance*, the superintendent sees that the school board has the information it needs about performance, and uses the information as a basis for recommending improvements in district operations.

Cooperation, interaction, and overlapping occur as boards and management teams fulfill their separate responsibilities. This is entirely natural and practical where the board and superintendent share an understanding of their respective responsibilities. The superintendent's responsibility for developing information and recommendations for the school board represents the very heart of the relationship.

The classroom manager is the teacher. He or she has great personal impact upon the students and enjoys extensive freedom to teach in an individual style. Teachers, of course, are governed by the policies, goals, and budgets established by the board and by school or district curriculum programs. They must carry out their responsibilities within these limits and constraints.

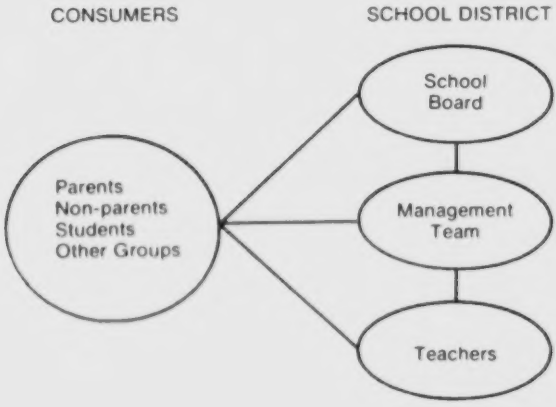
Linking district and consumers

Figure 2 illustrates another important aspect of education management: meeting the needs of consumers. School districts must meet the learning needs of a direct consumer, the student, and satisfy a secondary consumer, the parent. They also must satisfy non-parents that the district achieves its purposes at reasonable cost.

The key relationships among the school system and consumers depicted in *Figure 2* illustrate management's two-way responsibility both for understanding the

needs and attitudes of consumers and for communicating to them the district's aims, accomplishments, and problems. Under the over-all direction and guidance of the board, the management team acts on behalf of students, parents, and the community to ensure teaching competence and performance.

Figure 2—Management Linking the School District and its Consumers



Perhaps in a perfect market place education's consumers could communicate their wishes to the teaching staff directly. In practice this is unworkable. Assessment of educational results requires a good deal of information and professional skill in observation, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Obviously parents and students cannot directly determine the best personnel policies for recruitment, selection, development, appraisal, and compensation of the teaching staff. Nor can they distinguish fairly and equitably (or agree

upon) the good teachers from those who are unable to measure up to state and local standards. These functions are delegated on behalf of consumers to a group both democratically representative and professionally competent. The school board represents the community and governs the work of a professional management team. This team, in turn, ensures that the organization achieves educational results appropriate to the community.

Linking people and performance

Figure 3 illustrates how the management process links people and performance. The lower righthand box lists the tasks involved in building a staff that can achieve the purposes of the district:

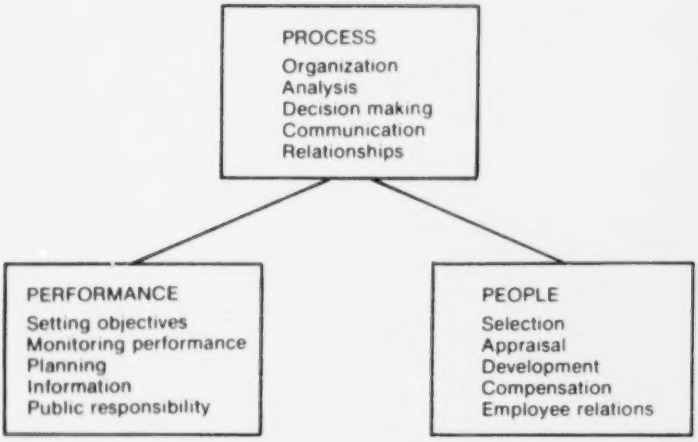
1) Selection of people for an organization requires more than just attracting the best people. It also calls for careful analysis of requirements and then judging skills and talents of candidates to decide who is most likely to achieve the results the organization expects.

2) Appraisal of staff performance is crucial to the effectiveness of any organization, partly because the selection process is not perfect and partly because people change. Appraisal need not be threatening if it is a reasonable, diagnostic process that enables people to recognize their own weaknesses and take steps to improve.

3) Development programs should include opportunities for the staff to improve and correct weaknesses uncovered by appraisal. College courses and typical inservice training for teachers are inadequate and possibly irrelevant. Specific suggestions will be made in Chapter 10.

4) Compensation is the reward for good performance. An organization that pays for good performance will in the long run attract and hold better people. The

Figure 3—The Management Process Linking People and Performance



low-performers will be encouraged to go elsewhere. School districts should take advantage of this simple principle, especially in a time of teacher surplus.

5) Employee relations often are conducted through representatives of unions or professional associations. This complicates the management objective of getting people to work toward district goals.

In the lower lefthand box of *Figure 3* are the elements of performance:

1) Setting objectives. Rarely do individuals or organizations achieve their objectives unless they know what they are. Objectives are not platitudes, but the expectations that direct resources and effort.

2) Monitoring performance. Performance must be checked and compared to objectives. Objectives are of

little value without some way to determine whether they have been achieved.

3) Planning. Educational programs represent the most important focus of planning. But enrollment, finance, and facilities must not be neglected; otherwise, empty school buildings and financial crises catch the manager unprepared. Like most public services, education has been better at operating and delivering services than at planning ahead.

4) Information. Some of the information required for effective management, such as financial and personnel data, is well-known and currently in use in well-managed school districts. However, the information that is needed most deals with the primary function of a school district—its educational performance. Learning results are out there: boards just have to get their hands on the information.

5) Public responsibilities. Ways to provide public accountability include representation on the board of a wide spectrum of the community and open two-way communication channels.

The top center box of *Figure 3* lists elements in the process of management that link people and performance:

1) Organization is the blueprint for management. It begins by defining each position on the management team in terms of responsibilities, relationships, and results expected. What does a district want to accomplish in learning results? How many people are needed—and what should they be doing to accomplish those results?

2) Analysis means finding out what's happening, based upon the facts of a situation. A disciplined process of analysis demands that evidence be estab-

lished first, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

3) Decision making means deciding what to do so that objectives are defined and results achieved. Decisions often involve choices from among alternatives.

4) Communication connects the people with the organization and takes many forms, ranging from personal and informal to written and authoritative.

5) The relationships among people in an organization as they carry out their functions must be productive, effective, and planned. This usually requires that each person's role be clarified for all to understand.

Any description of the actual process of management, with its inherent complexities and human relationships, may seem somewhat superficial. Nevertheless, unless broad concepts are examined, some elements of the management process may be overlooked, some over-emphasized, or individual techniques considered more important than they are.

The elements of management in the living context of a school district are far more complicated than any conceptual diagram. It cannot show the complexities of relationships, feelings, and attitudes that human beings inevitably bring to an organization and that make up the real world confronted by board members and managers alike. It is essential, however, for board members to understand the management responsibilities assigned to different levels of the school organization. A breakdown of responsibilities is presented in *Figure 4*.

1) The Board of Education. State constitutions and/or laws charge the board of education with exercising over-all responsibility for the educational performance of the district and for its financial condition. The board's responsibilities include educational programs that achieve desired results and development of a

management capability adequate to achieve those results. To meet these responsibilities, the board must develop a staff equal to the job and one that's fairly compensated for services to the district.

Figure 4—Key Management Responsibilities

SCHOOL BOARD
Establish purposes and goals
Balance educational costs and benefits
Develop staff talent
Monitor educational performance

MANAGEMENT TEAM
Plan and implement the principal elements of management (Figure 3):
- Process
- Performance
- People

TEACHERS
Classroom instruction
Educational services
Curriculum

SUPPORT STAFF
Transportation
Food service
Maintenance
Facilities
Clerical
Financial

The board's ultimate responsibility is to the public. (It parallels in many significant respects the responsibilities of a corporate board of directors or a university board of trustees.) The board must judge the adequacy of educational performance compared to district goals and take whatever action is required. While boards of education don't necessarily follow a single pattern of operation, several characteristics distinguish the effective ones. The effective board: 1) has a good working relationship with the superintendent; 2) understands the operation of the district, but does not circumvent the authority of the superintendent and the staff; 3) gives thoughtful attention to the character of the community served by the district as a basis for setting purposes, goals, and policies, and in making decisions; 4)

acts aggressively in some of the newer areas of board responsibilityincluding monitoring district performance, developing an effective management process, and adopting effective teacher personnel policies.

In demanding good performance, however, boards must be careful not to become directly involved in the administration of the district and not to expect the management team to respond without preparation or resources. The effective board's decision-making process reflects an adequate base of information and thorough analysis. Also, board meetings function smoothly with an appropriate involvement of the public, constructive behavior of board members, restraint in becoming involved in internal district matters, and thoughtful setting of agendas.

It might be helpful to cite a few examples of less-than-effective board performance. Perhaps the most conspicuous example is the school board that uses an inadequate process for selecting a new superintendent who can manage the district effectively. Inadequate board performance also can be seen in the antagonistic relationship between a board and superintendent. Some boards fail to insist upon an adequate planning process for the district, particularly with respect to finances, facilities, and enrollments. (They find themselves unprepared for either enrollment growth or decline.) Over-involvement by board members in school operations is a frequent—and reasonable—complaint of superintendents.

Other fairly common inadequacies in board behavior include: board meetings that focus on trivia (the number and type of pencil sharpeners for the central supply room) rather than district policies; failure to have information about the educational performance of the district, and a willingness to make decisions without a thorough basis in facts or without administrative

recommendations.

2) The Management Team. The underlying principle here is that management in education is a process concerned with the performance of people and results of the organization. What the management team does—particularly the superintendent—determines how successful a school district is going to be. A school board can establish goals and policies, monitor performance, develop staff talent, and balance the budget. But unless the board sees to it that the superintendent and the management team implement the principal elements of education management (people, process, performance), the district has a slim chance of achieving the learning results it seeks.

The management team's general responsibilities, outlined earlier, are to prepare plans for educational facilities and finances; implement policies and goals; direct the organization; select, appraise, and develop personnel; measure performance and report results; develop recommendations and information for the board, and maintain community relations. How these responsibilities break down on a position-by-position basis depends on the district's size and priorities and should be reflected in management's job descriptions.

3) Teachers and Staff. The teachers and staff of a school district are on the front line of activity, and it is to them that the effectiveness and development of management must be directed.

4) Consumers. While consumers of educational services are not a part of the management process of a school district, accountability to them is an essential part of management. Their satisfaction with the services they receive is an important measure of the organization's effectiveness. An important role of management is to judge consumer services, because parents and students may not detect inadequacies

before it is too late to prevent harm.

Understanding the importance of management is an important part of any board member's responsibility. Otherwise, the district may drift aimlessly or fail to accomplish its intended purposes. Allowing this to happen is one of the most serious failures for a board member. Not knowing whether it is happening is just as bad.

3/What education management is not

Misunderstandings of the meaning of management in education are fairly common. At best, these misunderstandings confuse, mislead, and delay progress in the development of management and the benefits it can bring. At worst, they waste time and resources, sometimes on quite a large scale, and lead to disillusionment with management—maybe even to the conclusion that it has no place in education.

Educators often confuse the term *management* with other concepts and procedures. While these other concepts and procedures may play an important role in management, they are by no means synonymous with the broad process that the term entails. For example, it is misleading to use the term *management* interchangeably with:

Educational administration
Systems management
Business management
Management by objectives
Program planning and budgeting
Industrial management

So that the real potential for management in education is not obscured, it is helpful for the school board member to understand what management is not—even though many of these related concepts have valid use as part of the management process in many school districts.

Educational Administration—The traditional body of knowledge on how to run a school district carries the name, educational administration. It has its

origin in courses under this heading in colleges of education. Educational administration deals with the mechanics of running a school district, but generally ignores such management fundamentals as developing people and appraising results. Like its counterpart public administration, school administration is too little concerned with purpose, people, and performance and too much with bureaucratic structure.

Under educational administration, the relationship between district goals and the competence of the people who carry them out is rarely dealt with explicitly. Both the superintendent and the principals do primarily those things that cannot feasibly be done in the classroom—order books, fill out report forms required by the state, schedule the use of facilities, compile budgets, account for funds, etc. Teachers are virtually autonomous, responsible only to their individual consciences for student learning results. School boards are relatively quiescent and easily kept (by the superintendent) at the policy level. Typically, boards are provided little if any information on student learning results. Under these circumstances, most school districts can be described as essentially unmanaged, since management by definition includes responsibility for results.

Under educational management, the school board moves up front as the link between community expectations and district performance. It ensures that the district's goals reflect the desires of its direct consumers (students), parents, and the community-at-large, that the district's performance is substantially in line with these goals, and that the people employed by the district have the capabilities to accomplish the goals.

The school board depends on a management team to develop, recommend, and implement practices, plans, and policies. The board is heavily concerned with the district's purpose and performance, as well as with the

organization, selection, appraisal, development, and compensation of people at all levels. The management team supplies information to the board necessary to ensure that district goals and desired performance are being achieved.

Education management, then, deals with the fundamentals of the organization in terms of its people and performance. The result achieved from this relationship becomes the yardstick for measuring a school district's effectiveness.

Schools of education and their departments of educational administration can make a contribution to the development of management in education. But first they will have to recognize past shortcomings. They may play a part in the newly-developing schools of management, which are growing out of graduate business schools and are embracing both public and business management in a single institution.

Systems Management—In recent years books and articles on systems management in education have become popular reading for those involved in education management. A field associated with computer programming, it has its own language, logic, and rationale.

Systems management has limited practical value to education management, because it fails to give sufficient attention to the humanistic side of management—people and their relationships—which is the key to making sure resources are used in a way that achieves results. Unfortunately, systems management has led several school districts to develop mechanical and theoretical models of management that have little to do with the real world of education management.

Business Management—The word *management* is often used in education to describe specific business-type activities—purchasing, bookkeeping, supervising

custodians, maintenance, and construction of facilities. These certainly are important activities, but they don't represent the fundamental purpose of the school district. The activities required to oversee the educational programs of schools obviously are quite different. Yet, the assumption prevails that management is something that exists only on the business side of district operations.

This hampers the development of management in education by diverting attention away from the main activity of school districts—the education of students. Too many boards find themselves concerned more with the cost of operating buses or sweeping floors than with the educational program of the district.

Management by Objectives (MBO)—Management by objectives has become a catch-phrase for the process of setting objectives and reviewing results throughout an organization. It is a desirable part of the management process, but only a small part of it.

The notion that management in a school district is limited to MBO suffers from serious weaknesses. Most MBO approaches were developed for industry and assume that a considerable body of information exists with respect to the actual performance of the organization (as is the case in most businesses). A school district, however, usually has little or no information on educational performance. Under these circumstances, individual objectives may run counter to the over-all purposes of the organization or represent only a minor component of the total performance that is required.

For example, a principal establishes the objective of getting along better with his staff, with the measure being the number of meetings he has with teachers. In one large district in the Chicago area, such an objective was adopted, and a principal received a salary increase because of a 50 percent increase in the number of staff

meetings (from eight to 12). The performance of that principal's school in terms of how much children learned was apparently overlooked.

Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS)—Program planning and budgeting systems grew up in the U.S. Department of Defense under Robert McNamara, a manager whose style was oriented to quantitative analysis. Under these circumstances PPBS had considerable value in coming to grips with an organization of almost overwhelming size and complexity In terms of education improvement, the value of PPBS is limited.

As an accounting tool, program budgeting can make a useful contribution to education. For example, in one high school district a new superintendent found through program budgeting that virtually every department in each high school had one extra teacher. By careful calculation and control, it was possible to eliminate more than 40 teaching positions without unduly increasing class size. Obviously, such control can have significant financial advantages for a district, whether the funds freed up are used for other educational programs, for teachers' salaries, or for a reduction in taxes. However, like MBO, PPBS by itself is not management.

Other than for cost analysis and basic staffing, PPBS provides relatively few significant alternatives for a school district. For its basic staffing pattern decisions, a district doesn't necessarily need an elaborate and costly set of data generated by computers. The notion that some dramatically different alternatives will be revealed by determining the cost per student of a reading or foreign language program is silly. It just doesn't happen, and the time and effort and cost invested in developing the information simply may be wasted.

Industrial Management—Management in educa-

tion can benefit from the management experience of industry, but school boards must not simply copy techniques that industry has developed. Management must be tailored to the specific requirements of the institution it serves.

The management techniques and skills appropriate for education will be as different from those suited to industry as the education field itself is different from the business world. Board members should keep in mind that the skills for managing an educational institution must grow in parallel with knowledge of what education is all about.

Some characteristics of industrial management relevant to education include:

1) Dealing explicitly with purposes and goals and the strategy for achieving them. The most fundamental underlying question—"What business are we in?"—must be answered by public institutions as well as private ones.

2) Paying attention to the needs and desires of consumers and their satisfaction with the schools. Techniques for assessing consumer opinions are readily available; school boards must use them.

3) Developing techniques for planning and analysis and finding out how best to use them in practice.

4) Viewing management as a human process (decision making and problem solving), not merely structure or principles.

5) Strengthening financial planning, economic analysis, cost accounting, and control.

6) Giving attention to quantification, analysis, and the use of information in decision making, even in areas where quantitative analysis is difficult.

7) Learning from experience how to create an organi-

zation—the combination of job responsibilities and the people to fulfill them that produces the results desired.

8) Gaining insight and a better understanding of human behavior through practical experience and study of the behavioral sciences.

9) Developing techniques of personnel appraisal, emphasizing results rather than traits, and investing in the development of human capabilities.

10) Developing compensation policies that contribute to staff satisfaction, motivation, and productivity.

11) Recognizing the recruitment and selection of people as a vital function.

Education can accelerate the development of its own management technology by drawing on the longer experience of industry, but educators should be cautious about applying management techniques suited best to large manufacturing companies.

4/A management role for school boards

Simply put, school boards are supposed to know what's going *on* in the classroom without going *in*. They delegate to the superintendent the responsibility to find out and report in a comprehensible way the learning results of the schools. Then the board gives the superintendent the authority and the resources to develop a process of management that accomplishes the important mission it has assigned. When the management team has done its job, the board should have a basis on which to make decisions and monitor the educational performance of the district—its primary obligation.

Sounds simple enough: the board sends the superintendent off with the chore of developing a management process and waits for him to return with the information the board needs to do its job. Lurking in the halls, however, are a few complications that could get in the way unless boards and superintendents recognize the rationale for this approach to education management.

Boards increasingly express their need to know the learning results of the district (and their right to challenge the adequacy of those results) because of pressures they face—public, union, financial. Boards, in turn, pressure the superintendent for the information they need to face their own obligations. Yet they're making the demand of someone who does not have a system for supplying it, and who is worried that the board may be looking over his shoulder as he searches for the information it wants.

Remember: The development of the management process in a school district can take place only when the board understands its role—and sticks to it! That

means the board must respect the superintendent's role—and stay out of it! It may be easier for boards to select furniture for the faculty lounge than to monitor educational performance, but they must resist the temptation. A school board's limited amount of time should be spent on four main areas of responsibility: monitoring district educational performance and learning results; developing staff talent; establishing district purpose and goals; and balancing educational costs and benefits. Boards also have another special responsibility today: they should contribute to the development of management in their districts.

Monitoring results

Perhaps the most important change in board members' views of their responsibilities in recent years has been the increasing emphasis on their right to know how children in their district are faring academically. The board and superintendent, therefore, should agree on a process whereby the board periodically reviews learning results and determines the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved. Board policy should specify the time and the procedures for this review.

Board members should not expect 100 percent accomplishment of objectives, but they should be able to discover what has been accomplished, what hasn't, and why not. There is nothing wrong with objectives that reach beyond what the staff can achieve with current facilities, finance, and knowhow. In fact, the board whose staff is achieving all of its objectives should be skeptical as to how significant the objectives are in the first place.

A variety of perfectly logical and acceptable reasons may explain why objectives have not been or cannot be achieved. One board, for example, may simply ask why one junior high school in the district has a math pro-

gram turning out students at two years beyond grade level and another one is barely getting students to grade level, when the ability of the students is about the same.

Board members can expect various kinds of useful information to assist them in understanding the district's educational performance. Student learning information—achievement test scores, for example—is readily obtainable and helpful in gauging the success of schools. Interpretation of the information for the board is crucial—that's a job for the superintendent, management team, and teachers, who may also need the counsel of outside professionals. Other indicators of performance include student opinions and attitudes toward the school, the teachers, the programs; observations and feedback by parents and other citizens; employee opinions and attitudes, and student discipline, attendance and dropout rates. While no single measure can be used to evaluate the school system, the board should review a variety of information and listen carefully and critically to the conclusions and recommendations of the management team and staff.

The collection and analysis of information the board needs may require additional funds for materials and personnel. It's money well-spent. A board is penny-wise and dollar-foolish if it does not allocate the money needed to collect and interpret information.

Emphasis on educational performance in board responsibilities departs significantly from conventional thinking in most school districts. It requires a new allocation of available board time for performance appraisal, more information coupled with better analysis, more delegation to the management team and teachers for interpretations, recommendations, and action, and a stronger management team. These departures, however, point the way to better-run school districts.

Developing staff talent

In school districts, as in any organization, the most important ingredient is people. Their talents must be adequate to accomplish the goals of the organization; the organization in turn owes to its people—and itself—the opportunity to develop their talents so they can contribute to the greatest extent possible.

It is particularly important that the board provide a strong management staff and ensure some degree of continuity. Board members should insist that the superintendent have a plan to develop management talent for the future. At least some backup should be available for most administrative posts, although most school districts need not have an internal candidate for every management position. The board is obligated to spend the money for improving the management capacity of school administrators and developing potential candidates within the school system for managerial positions. At least annually, the board should meet with the superintendent to review management personnel in terms of their potential for meeting future management needs of the district.

The school board also should concern itself with the development of teachers and the support staff. Too few districts invest time or money in teacher development, other than inservice days or reimbursement for graduate courses. Good staff development can include programs enabling teachers to watch other teachers in their district, practical workshops for the new teacher or the teacher who has changed grade levels, and programs geared to assessment for all teachers, giving them the chance to look at themselves and to determine what they could do to improve.

Board members should give attention to people development because the district's personnel competence is its main resource. This obligation even includes

encouraging interested citizens to serve on future school boards.

A statement of purpose

A board of education must address itself to a statement of purpose for the district. The statement of purpose must both reflect community desires and conform to requirements of state law. For one community it may reflect a college preparatory orientation; for another it may emphasize job-entry training. Community input can be obtained through the board itself, public hearings, a representative committee, and surveys that provide information on what citizens expect the schools to accomplish.

Writing a statement of purpose is a good exercise that forces the board to spell out what the school's job is—and by implication what it isn't. Board members soon learn that no matter how hard they try to limit the role of public schools, special interest groups always are waiting in the wings with a new responsibility they want the schools to assume. Remember the debate on sex education? "It belongs in the home. . . The church should do it." The schools got it. Some will insist that rugby be a part of the physical education program. And on and on.

An explicit statement of purpose enables the current board to focus on what the school district seeks to do. It enables succeeding boards to understand the basis on which past decisions were made and actions taken.

Once a board agrees on district purpose, it then develops goals within the context of that purpose. Goals, which guide the management team, state generally the expected outcomes of the school system's efforts. Here again community input is important. As boards work out district purpose and goals, they may want to set separate ones for each school as well as for the district in general.

Deciding district policies also is a function of the board. Legally the board is required to make appropriate rules for the smooth operation of the district where statutes do not provide the necessary guidance. Board policies should not be restatements of laws; rather, they should pertain to areas where the state has not prescribed action. Board policies provide a written reference for future decision making and ensure a degree of continuity and equity in the operation of the district.

There is no end to the variety of policy decisions that school boards must make—curriculum, transportation, building planning and maintenance, staff development, student services, human rights, collective bargaining, community relations, budget development and so forth. The most important elements of board policy, however, are those that deal with management—organization, evaluation of performance, compensation, and development. Because lay board members are not experts in all of these areas, the board must rely on professional knowledge and judgment from its superintendent and management team and other experts as needed. Board members, however, must learn enough about all school matters to ask questions, evaluate information, and vote with conviction.

Balancing costs and benefits

School boards are expected to exercise financial responsibility to the taxpayers for the education system under board control. In this role they (1) review the budget as developed and recommended by the management team, (2) exercise their right to examine and question all elements of cost including basic allocation of resources and increases/decreases, and (3) ensure that the revenue side of the budget covers the expenditure side.

Typically, school boards review bills prior to payment

and obtain an audit by a reputable firm or state agency at least annually. Monthly board reports on the status of expenditures compared to budgets and on cash position are essential, along with three-to-five-year financial projections geared into parallel enrollment and facility plans. Techniques and skills in these areas are well-developed and available; but not all districts use them.

Judging the relationship of educational benefits to costs is more difficult. The development of analytical techniques that provide for school boards a way to measure return on investment is a challenge that may never be fully met. School boards should be warned that they will not find the answers in the program budgeting or accrual accounting systems now being touted for school districts by the accounting industry.

Until practical and education-tailored techniques for cost/benefit accounting are devised, boards are left with the common-sense approach of listing their priorities and paying for them, one by one, as long as the money holds out. Boards of districts with a dollar crunch have to look at all programs in relation to what each program is accomplishing. Then they rate them, and start cutting from the bottom up, if they have to. French for K-6 may have to go, especially when the board finds out that a seventh grader, in one year, can achieve the same degree of fluency as a sixth grader who has had seven years of French. Although some states require it by law, formal physical education may not be necessary every day for all students, most of whom generally engage in their own forms of physical activity daily.

Developing management

A special responsibility of school boards today is to encourage the development of management in their districts. Fortunately, many elements of management in education have already been developed to the point of

practical application, though their actual use is by no means widespread. In considering how to strengthen management, board members should concentrate on the basic elements, especially those that offer the greatest opportunities for improvement in their own district. These basic elements of management in education will be covered more fully in later chapters. Described briefly they include:

- Organization and management
- Planning and information on educational performance
- Developing and motivating people
- Relationships inside and outside the district

Organization and Management—Fundamental to the effectiveness of any enterprise is its basic organization—the way in which jobs and responsibilities are defined and people put in place to carry them out. Without the right people doing the right jobs, districts cannot expect to fulfill their mission and purpose. The definition of responsibilities and positions should reflect the goals of the district and state what is expected from each staff member. The management team needs a thorough understanding of each person's responsibilities, how the organization is to work in practice, and what results are to be achieved in total and by each position.

School district managers must accept responsibility for the performance of the enterprise—especially student learning and parent/student satisfaction—as well as for the performance of staff and the district's economic health. Unless they accept these responsibilities, administrators are responsible for their own duties, but are not functioning as managers responsible for the performance of other people.

Chapters 5 and 6 address more fully the basics of dis-

trict organization, the process of management, and the management team.

Planning and Information on Educational Performance—One of the most important developments in business management during this century has been the continuing effort to quantify information for making decisions. (The same development can be found in agriculture, where important progress has been made in the improvement of productivity and performance.) Quantification is a process that has only just begun in education. Without doubt, the job is more difficult than in business or agriculture, because educational results are more difficult to measure. Nevertheless, the potential for strengthening education through better performance evaluation is at least as great as in agriculture or business. Because the end results of education are difficult to measure, the performance results that boards should expect should be expressed in acceptable ranges rather than in exact figures.

Standardized tests are administered in many districts, but it is the use of the data that counts. Good principals and teachers know that reviewing detailed test data on the performance of children gives some indication of what goes on in the classroom. Test data, however, are only part of the performance information that is needed. The judgments and opinions of taxpayers, parents, teachers, and students are also useful indicators of school and district performance. Such information can be relatively simple and inexpensive to acquire.

Consumer judgments and test data can be supplemented by other performance indicators, including budget results, student attendance, dropout and retention rates, levels of participation in courses and activities, and teacher utilization efficiency. In all cases, the identification of information relevant to evaluation should

involve the managers being evaluated, so that they can understand and accept the results. Procedures to ensure accuracy and impartiality are essential. Where possible, it is helpful to compare findings with data from other districts.

As important as performance information is, its use is more important, particularly the managers who can apply judgment and experience in reaching conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, adequate time must be allotted for management team interpretation and analysis of performance information. The team and the board should also give sufficient time to discussing findings, conclusions, and recommendations so that the board has a basis on which to take action. Decision making based on real evidence helps the board exercise its basic responsibility for monitoring educational performance and identifying needed improvements.

Chapters 7 and 8 address planning and information more fully.

Developing and Motivating People—The principal resource (and largest budget item) of a school district is its staff, especially teachers. Any program to strengthen management performance must deal effectively with teachers.

Good recruitment and selection techniques represent the starting point. However, no recruitment system is perfect. Thus performance appraisal of teachers must reveal those who do not measure up to the performance a district needs to achieve desired learning results. Most school districts should also re-think and re-plan their training and development programs for teachers, which are notoriously weak.

Performance appraisal too often focuses on personality traits and allows too much room for arbitrary decisions. Teachers need constructive, relevant information to help them understand their own perfor-

mance and recognize the areas that need improvement. Classroom test results and the opinions of students, parents, and teachers should be a part of any evaluation that is fair and comprehensive. A teacher appraisal system should be tailored to the individual district and be acceptable and tolerable to its teachers.

Staff development programs should be individualized. If staff development is supposed to correct weaknesses, then it must be remembered that no two people have exactly the same weaknesses; staff development programs must be tailored to the needs of each individual employee.

Every district should have a performance-based compensation plan for its management team. The only real justification for pegging management salaries above those of teachers is that managers take responsibility for the development and performance of other people. It is only fair that managers be rewarded adequately for accepting these responsibilities. Boards who base managers' compensation on performance have a sound justification for such expenditures and, more than likely, get better performance.

The most common teacher compensation plan—a lock step salary schedule—ensures that the worst teachers are paid as well as the best. This provides a strong incentive for poorer teachers to stay where they are, and is a clear step toward mediocre education. Organizations that pay employees more for doing a better job have higher morale. However, school districts should move toward performance-based compensation by drawing on the best available guidance rather than by applying overly simplistic models.

Chapters 9, 10, and 11 address more fully the selection, development, appraisal and compensation of school district employees.

Relationships Inside and Outside the District— No one close to education today needs to be reminded of the dramatic impact unions have had. The process of collective bargaining has been perhaps the single most important enlargement of school board activity during the past several years. The speed with which unions have succeeded in organizing teachers has alarmed boards and administrators across the nation. Less widely recognized is the fundamental impact of unions on the need for management in education.

School managers must have a constructive relationship with their staffs and provide them with the satisfaction in their jobs that is essential to good performance. These requirements for staff relationships in the face of union organizing and collective bargaining call for vast improvements in management and human relations skills.

School districts that exercise their public responsibilities effectively invariably do a good job in communications. Yet with rising parental uneasiness about educational performance, based often on inflammatory publicity regarding declining test scores, communication with the public is increasingly difficult for all school districts. Good communication with evidence of satisfactory district performance is an essential ingredient of good management.

Chapter 12 addresses more fully the challenges of collective bargaining and management communications.

"Some boards and superintendents see their managerial responsibilities as transcending the teaching process rather than directly influencing the teacher/ student relationship. This remoteness of management from the teaching process may explain the attractiveness of collective bargaining and unionization for teachers. "

Page 57

The elements
of management

"The greatest potential for the success of education management lies with the individual teacher in the classroom. Getting teachers to accept responsibility for the performance of students represents the first level of management at work. The management process builds from there."

Page 66

5/Getting organized to manage

Organization and the process of management are often weak links in the chain connecting school boards with student learning. Too often, educational excellence in American schools comes, not from the way a school district is organized and managed, but in spite of it. To accomplish the district's purpose and goals, school boards must work from an organization plan—essentially a blueprint for the management of the district. The blueprint should reflect district priorities, show the number and kinds of management staff positions needed, list the responsibilities of each manager, and outline relationships among them.

The management plan

The superintendent, as head of the management team, is in charge of developing and implementing the organization plan. It's the board's job to see that he does both. The superintendent is responsible not only for handing to the board the piece of paper headed "Organization Chart," but also for supplying the rationale and job descriptions for the organization he recommends. In addition, he makes sure that the person in each position on the organization chart, once approved by the board, understands what is expected.

An organization plan should not be considered permanent. Staff positions will vary according to district goals and financial circumstances. One organization plan won't last forever, either. The plan ought to be reviewed at least annually and adjusted where necessary Major changes should be expected as often as every five years, or with the appointment of a new superintendent.

A few words of caution: Putting working relationships among staff members on paper is one thing. Predicting correctly how people will work together in practice is something else. How an organization plan will work in practice simply cannot be defined precisely in advance. Don't be discouraged; just be forewarned and prepared to accept adjustments.

Because organization and the management process are not yet well-developed in education, conventional models may not be the place to start. Typically the hierarchial structures of organizations in education have been borrowed from other fields (the military or business), which have fundamentally different characteristics. As the superintendent and board experiment with the organization of their district, they will want to consider the following general observations:

1) Some districts may have too many administrators and too few managers, if one accepts the definition of a manager as one who takes direct operational responsibility for performance, competence, and results, while an administrator performs certain administrative tasks without accepting over-all responsibility for educational performance.

Most districts would benefit from a greater emphasis on management and reduced attention to administration. Such a change in emphasis usually results in fewer central administrative staff positions and in more jobs with direct responsibilities for people and performance. For example, an assistant superintendent may be assigned responsibility for educational performance in a group of schools rather than for staff personnel practices.

2) At the high school level, an emphasis on management will often result in heavier responsibilities for department heads. Their responsibilities will shift from clerical or administrative duties to those of a super-

visory and managerial nature. They will be responsible for the performance and the competence of the staff in their departments. The development of this role, usually in the form of team leaders, also is taking place in elementary and junior high schools. This appears to be a good way to draw teachers into the management process and to position members of the management team at the teacher level, closer to students.

3) Encouragement of school autonomy and the development of programs and organizations individualized to each school can lead to the full development of each school as an educational institution in its own right. This will enable the school to meet the distinctive needs of its community and provide creative opportunities for staff and students.

4) Teachers can be more heavily involved in managerial responsibilities through committees or special assignments, as well as through supervisory roles. With or without a teacher union contractual agreement, the board has the right to expect teachers to participate in helping the district reach its goals. Teachers should serve on committees to identify objectives, study programs and evaluate them, and perform other duties as called for.

5) The principal's job should be re-defined, with a reduction in administrative responsibilities and an expansion in managerial, staff development, and educational leadership roles. A principal should be free to directly supervise teachers' work with children, and should understand that he has responsibility for children's learning. The principal must be held responsible for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

6) A reduction in central staff functions and people in business, personnel, and curriculum areas where possible allows for allocation of resources for

classroom teachers and direct managerial positions. Shifting of resources, of course, should be based on overall organizational effectiveness.

7) Stronger staff support to the school board in the form of top management time and attention provides a better foundation for monitoring performance and making decisions. The superintendent may need help in test data analysis or in financial or enrollment projections, for example.

Many of these ideas imply a more important and difficult job for the principal. As the most clearly responsible line manager below the superintendent, principals are in many respects the key to improved school management. Decentralization of authority for neighborhood schools combined with improved performance evaluation and management development is essential, especially in large urban school districts. Substantial cost savings, as well as better educational performance, can be the payoff with proper implementation.

Obviously, not all of the ideas presented here would apply in any one district. They are organization concepts that board members should be alert to. A board should not be surprised if its management team wishes to attempt these or other departures from traditional thinking in educational organization. Such efforts should be encouraged.

Several sample organization plans are presented in *Figures 5-a* through *5-d*. Each plan reflects a different district's definition of management positions, responsibilities, and relationships. They are not suggested as models for every district, but rather show the wide range of alternatives and the need to fit organization to a district's requirements, objectives, and resources.

In thinking about organization planning, basic questions should be asked to give boards and the management team a clue as to where to begin to seek

organization improvements.

The questions:

- Are school board responsibilities at the policy-making level or at the administrative level?
- Does the board know how the district is performing educationally?
- Is the board addressing the most important issues and making sound decisions?
- How should the superintendent spend his time?
- How should a principal's attention be divided between educational leadership and day-to-day administration?
- What are the principals' responsibilities? Are they aware of them?
- How do central staff personnel assist principals? What working relationships are needed?
- At the teaching level, what positions and groupings are useful to provide an attractive career structure, encourage the development of teacher effectiveness, and make best use of the talents available in the district? (Team leaders, master teachers, and other such approaches are being used successfully in districts to strengthen the management capability of teachers.)
- How can teacher committees be used most effectively, including their value in monitoring performance?

Good organization planning is vital to school districts. Without the right people doing the right jobs, districts cannot expect to carry out their responsibilities.

The management process

The organization plan of a school district can be put on paper. The management process itself exists in the personalities and relationships of the people employed by the district. Management is an intensely human pro-

cess—and probably nothing is more distinctive to an organization than this process. The history of the district; its traditions, practices and relationships; the personalities of the individuals involved now and in the past—all are of vital importance in understanding the district's character as an educational community. They provide the setting in which the organization operates and determine the character of the organization itself.

Those in charge of an organization must think through the process by which they determine purposes and goals, plan expected performance, and monitor the results. Failure to do so leaves the organization with no direction.

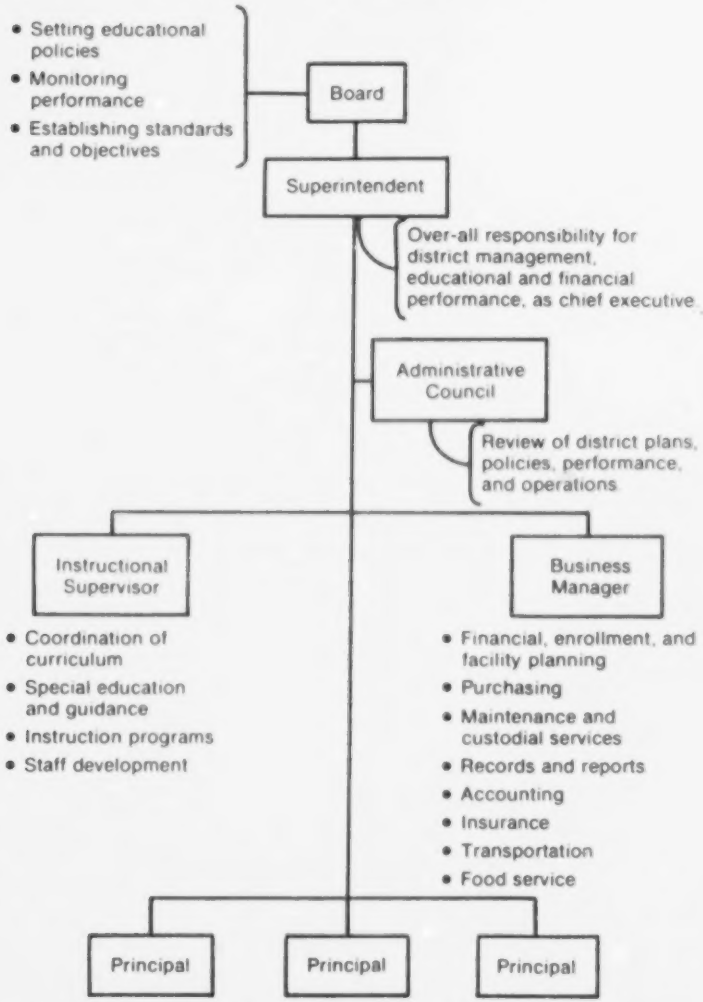
Management is the process of bringing the human resources of an organization together in a way that makes them effective in attaining the organization's objectives. That means specifying the responsibilities and relationships of the people of the organization in such a way that the organization's objectives are understood and achieved.

The key to planning is to determine the talent required and how it can best be assembled and put to work. This includes assessing talents available internally, talents that might be obtained from outside the organization, and arriving at the best balance of the two sources.

Organization planning is particularly complicated in education because of the need to involve the teaching staff in the process of management. The teacher/pupil relationship (including parents) is the focal point of any educational institution. The closer the management process is brought to the teachers, the better. A curriculum department can generate volumes of excellent programs, a superintendent can issue executive orders and detail needed changes, but unless the teacher is brought into the planning and execution of district management

Figure 5-a—School District Organization Plan

Three schools, 1,200 enrollment



Over-all responsibility for planning, operation, and performance at school level, within established district policies, funding, standards and objectives; participation in district planning.

Figure 5-b—School District Organization Plan
Three schools, 6,000 enrollment

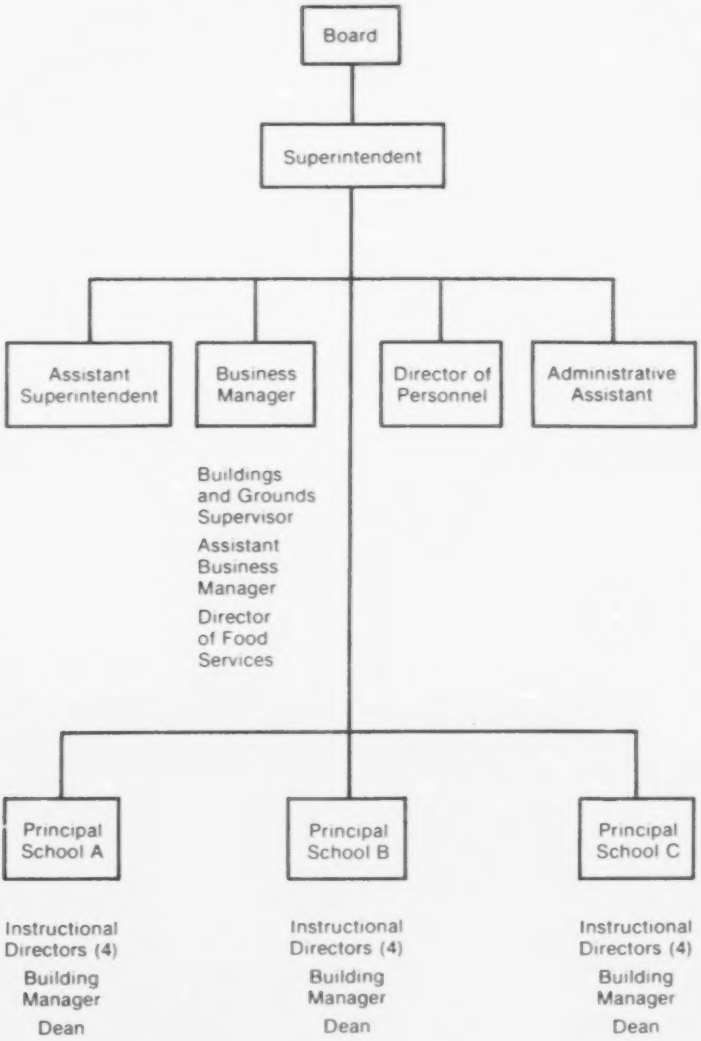


Figure 5-c—School District Organization Plan
21 schools, 9,000 enrollment

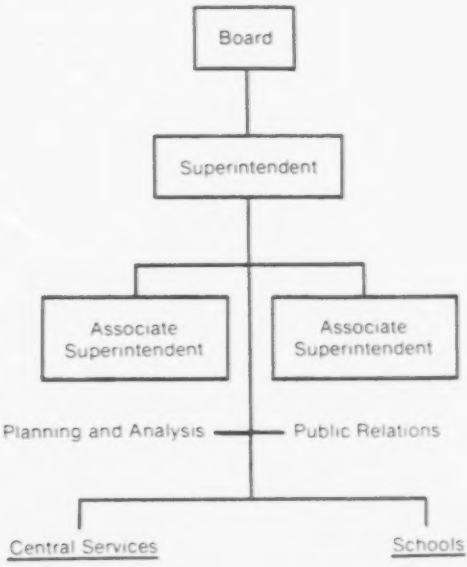
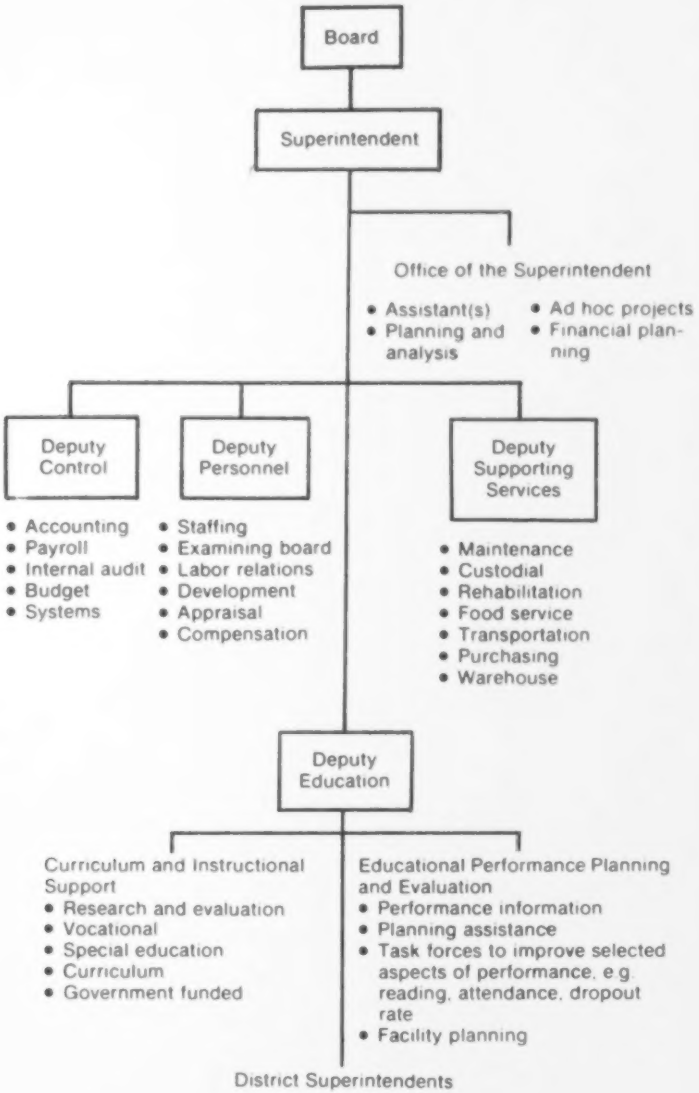


Figure 5-d—Organization Plan for Large Urban School System



goals, little improvement in learning can be expected.

Management should be viewed as a means to making teachers more effective. Management must:

- Provide teachers with the stimulus and know-how they need to evaluate educational results;
- Appraise teacher performance to ensure competence;
- Help teachers develop their talents and improve their performance.

Some boards and superintendents see their managerial responsibilities as transcending the teaching process rather than directly influencing the teacher/student relationship. This remoteness of management from the teaching process may explain the attractiveness of collective bargaining and unionization for teachers.

After an organization plan has been developed and adopted, boards must identify and attract managers who can carry out the district's plan. They must select managers whose decision-making and supervisory skills can fill the requirements of their positions. Then boards must monitor the performance of managers to ensure that they measure up to requirements and expectations.

What gives life and vitality to a school district and distinguishes the successful one? Whatever the organization plan, it is given life by the interaction among people within the organization. School district management is no mere mechanical process of setting objectives and reviewing performance. It is the direction of living people and activities designed to produce results. If there is one relevant lesson from business management, it is that success in running an organization is extremely difficult to predict or to capture in words—it is discovered by observing results.

It is with the understanding of these difficulties in

comprehending the process of management that the specific techniques of performance planning and the establishment of personnel appraisal, compensation, and development should be considered. Singly, these are merely techniques. Brought into place as parts of an over-all management process, they make a vital contribution to the effectiveness of any organization and to the competence of its people. The adaptation and interpretation of these techniques to suit the uniqueness of each school district is of vital importance. Board members should encourage the superintendent and management team to tailor techniques to their district, rather than to adopt those that may have worked elsewhere or have been prescribed as the ideal. Boards also should insist that policies and plans for the district be adopted in each of the critical areas of management discussed in the following chapters.

6/ Building a management team

The superintendent and management team guide staff efforts toward the educational performance expected by the board and district consumers. While the basic ingredients of education management are the same for all districts—people, process, and performance—the strategies and procedures will not be the same for any two districts. The make-up of the management team, as well as what its members do, is determined by the size of the district and its priorities. A district with 1,000 students will have a smaller management team than a district with 10,000 and each will have its own breakdown of responsibilities for individual managers as they work to accomplish the goals of the district. A district with 100,000 students will have yet another size and kind of management team.

Also, changing priorities of the school board force management team responsibilities to change, too. Perhaps development of teachers is the top priority one year, because teachers need help in individualizing the math program. Perhaps financial constraints dictate that nonacademic programs be re-evaluated and the least productive ones eliminated. Perhaps high staff turnover requires attention to recruiting and selecting new personnel. Perhaps declining enrollment brings up the emotional issue of closing a school. Such situations must be taken into account as management teams establish their priorities and division of responsibilities. The only management position common to all districts is that of the superintendent.

Figure 6—A Superintendent's Job Description

BASIC RESPONSIBILITY:

The Superintendent is Chief Executive Officer, responsible for overall planning, operation, and performance of the district. He provides staff support and recommendations to the Board with respect to decision-making, policies and planning, and is the Board's agent in all relationships with the staff. He selects, organizes, and gives leadership to the management team, oversees planning, staff development and reward systems throughout the district, and ensures adequate operational and financial control.

REPORTS TO: Board of Education

SUPERVISES: Associate Superintendents (2)
Director of Planning and Analysis
Director of Public Relations
Administrator of Business Services
Administrator of Educational Services
Principals (21)

PRIMARY DUTIES:

1) Establish and maintain a constructive relationship with the Board of Education based on appropriate performance and financial information. Guide and aid the Board in its effective operation through competent staff support and through development of his and the Board's skills in working together effectively.
2) Establish programs and practices for the constructive relationship of the district with its community on a school and district level.
3) Direct and coordinate district planning to ensure educational programs and performance in line with community needs and desires. Ensure sound planning of financial, facility, and enrollment requirements for the future. Prepare and recommend an annual budget consistent with long-range plans and appropriate to community financial resources.
4) Recommend district purposes, objectives, policies, and decisions as required, supported appropriately with information, analysis and conclusions presented to the Board and to the public.

What is a chief executive?

No single position has more impact on any institution than its chief executive officer—be it university, business, government, or school district. At the same time,

5) Organize, staff, and give leadership to the management team as required to meet district objectives. Plan and execute a management development program appropriate to realizing the district's educational objectives.
6) Establish and maintain constructive relationships throughout the district at all levels, including community, parents, students, teachers, staff, and Board.
7) Ensure the development and operation of adequate recruiting, selection, appraisal, and compensation systems to meet district objectives.
8) Develop the competence of teachers, staff, and management to the maximum extent possible in the best interests of the individuals involved and to meet district objectives.
9) Establish a performance monitoring system incorporating test data results and consumer judgments to meet the needs for performance information throughout the organization.
10) Establish financial and operating controls adequate to safeguard the district against misuse of funds or unnecessary operations, and to ensure fair value for all expenditures.
11) Provide leadership to the district and community in developing, achieving, and maintaining high educational standards, sound programs, and good performance.
12) Ensure that district operations meet all legal requirements.
13) Oversee staff negotiation and contract administration.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

1) Work with the Board of Education to ensure effective Board operations, district policies, objectives, decisions, and performance in line with the public interest.
2) Maintain effective relationships with and among staff at all levels of the organization.
3) Ensure a healthy relationship of the district with its community.
4) Represent the district as required and appropriate in various community, association, and government activities.

no other position quite equals it in lack of guidance as to what the institution should be doing, what strategy it should follow, and what people should be chosen and assigned what responsibilities, in order for the institution to achieve its goals. As chief executive officer, the

superintendent is held responsible by the school board for the educational performance of the district. The essence of his position can be summarized as: (1) helping the board define the mission or purpose of the organization and jobs to be done; (2) devising a strategy to do the jobs; (3) choosing the people who can do the jobs, and (4) taking responsibility for accomplishment of the mission.

The superintendent selects, organizes, and gives leadership to the management team: oversees planning, staff development, and reward systems throughout the district: and ensures adequate operational and financial control. Aided by staff support, he provides recommendations to the board with respect to decision making, policies, and planning and is their agent in all relationships with the staff.

The general management responsibilities of the superintendent apply to most school districts. How these responsibilities are interpreted, broken down, and turned into specific activities for a given district in a given year is shown in the job description in *Figure 6*.

Staffing the central office

The central office staff for the district—its size and the responsibilities of each member—depends upon district enrollment and the specific staff-support needs of the district. Some districts need several assistants; others none. An assistant in one district may have a special area of responsibility (e.g., financial planning). In another district, an assistant may have direct responsibility for educational performance in the elementary schools.

To generalize about the responsibilities of the central staff is impossible. Each superintendent and board must decide what is needed by referring to district goals (What are we trying to accomplish?) and by considering what people are required to accomplish them. Because determining central office jobs and responsibilities in a

district is extremely important, both to the cost of administration and to over-all educational performance, the board and the superintendent should be sure to take the following steps:

1) Define carefully the district's management priorities, educational strengths and weaknesses, and the broad tasks to be accomplished by the management team over a period of a few years.

2) Determine the efforts required to translate district objectives into accomplishments through specific positions, responsibilities, relationships, and staffing patterns.

3) Consider the adequacy of the people currently available within the district to meet these requirements (taking into account future development possibilities) and the talent that is available outside the district.

Both the talents and responsibilities of the superintendent will also need to be taken into account in determining central office administrative staffing, especially in smaller districts.

The principal as manager

Although the position of principal is as well-established in education as that of the superintendent, a surprising amount of uncertainty currently surrounds the job of the principal. Principals once were considered necessary only to deal with difficult children, teachers, and parents. Union contracts often severely restrict the principal's authority and today many find the administrative/clerical side of their job the only one they can carry out effectively. The negotiated contract pre-empts many of the principal's decision-making alternatives. This creates a paradox and source of frustration. In order for the management process to work at all, principals must be viewed as responsible for the educational

Figure 7—A Principal's Job Description

BASIC RESPONSIBILITY

The Principal of each building is responsible for giving leadership to the faculty in the establishment of that school's character as an educational institution, including organization, curriculum, instructional system, human relations, and personnel. Responsibilities focus primarily on monitoring performance and developing competence to realize the school's objectives within a framework of district goals and policies. The Principal is responsible for all activities within the school and for their coordination internally, as well as with the outside community and district. The Principal, although working closely and supportively with the faculty, retains responsibility for (1) the educational performance and learning of the children and for their general well-being while in school, (2) for the competence of the school's teaching staff and the fairness of their treatment, and (3) for the relationships of the school internally and to its community and the central office including staff, Superintendent and Board.

REPORTS TO: Superintendent

SUPERVISES: School Faculty

PRIMARY DUTIES:

1) Plan, recommend, and develop the organization and character of the school as an educational institution, including its philosophy, curriculum, social system, instructional system, human relations, scheduling, and personnel.
2) Establish and maintain a constructive, healthy, informative relationship between the school and its community, especially parents.
3) Operate within district policy and established budgets and plans, and draw upon services available from the central office as appropriate.
4) Provide personal leadership to the school in terms of its purpose and performance and the development and competence of all people associated with it—teachers, students, and staff.

character and performance of their schools, including teacher effectiveness and student learning. Tremendous variations exist among assumptions about the

5) Monitor school performance against its educational objectives, district policies and best practice, using all available quantitative information as well as judgments and observations from people associated with the school, including teachers, students, and parents.
6) Develop staff competence to the highest possible extent consistent with talents and resources available, including the supervision and selection of teachers, counseling and coaching, individualized staff development planning, and the necessary evaluation/appraisal/diagnosis.
7) Work with the children of the school both directly in counseling, planning, and discipline, and indirectly in coordination of records, services, activities, and scheduling. Monitor educational performance through first-hand contact with students and teachers.
8) Coordinate the provision of services within the school, including pupil personnel services with classroom teachers, as well as custodial, maintenance, transportation, and food services.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

1) Work directly with children to monitor educational achievement and personal satisfaction.
2) Work closely with the school faculty, providing support and leadership toward their personal competence and professional performance.
3) Work with the school's community, especially parents, to assure that their needs and interests are reflected in school operations, that they are involved in school activities, and that they are kept informed of school policies, programs, and procedures.
4) Work with the central staff and office of the Superintendent to assure operation of the school consistent with district policies and standards, to draw upon central services in the most constructive fashion, and to contribute the school viewpoint to district-wide decision making.

principal's job.

A principal is to a school what a superintendent is to a district. He directs the people in his building toward

successful educational performance. He gives leadership to the faculty in establishing the school's character as an educational institution, including organization, curriculum, instructional system, human relations, and personnel. Responsibilities focus primarily on monitoring performance and developing competence to reach the school's objectives within a framework of district goals and policies. The principal is responsible for all activities within the school and for their coordination internally as well as with the outside community and district. Although working closely and supportively with the faculty, the principal retains responsibility for (1) the educational performance and learning of the children and for their general well-being while in school, (2) for the competence of the school's teaching staff and the fairness of their treatment, and (3) for the relationships of the school internally, to its community, and to the central office, staff, superintendent, and board.

The description of a principal's responsibilities in *Figure 7* is based on these managerial assumptions about the job.

People in the positions of assistant principal, department head, and team (teacher) leader serve the school and thus the district's goals—by doing their part to ensure that the educational performance of the school meets the highest possible standards of student achievement. This level of school management can have a major impact on the performance of a select group of teachers in a school, department, or classroom team.

The greatest potential for the success of education management lies with the individual teacher in the classroom. Getting teachers to accept responsibility for the performance of students represents the first level of management at work. The management process builds from there.

7/Planning

When enrollments grow, many school districts find themselves without enough classrooms to go around. When enrollments decline, many districts find themselves with too many schools and too many teachers. Inflation erodes the financial base of all school districts, and involvement of state and federal governments in school funding adds the element of uncertainty.

Still, the problems encountered in financial planning are modest compared to the challenge of educational planning. The really tough issues arise in determining what kind of an educational institution each school should develop into—its philosophy, character, emphasis, objectives, organization, and expected results. All too often, these issues are not considered.

Educational planning

Educational planning deals with values, relationships, and philosophies. It also involves such volatile issues as when children are ready to learn and what teachers can reasonably accomplish with them. All of this takes place in the absence of any precise measures and where personal style plays a large role. Educational planning calls for considerable involvement of the teaching staff. It takes into account the organization of the teachers, classes, and students; the scheduling of teachers' and students' time; arrangements and activities within the building—even the basic character of the school itself as an educational institution.

A good place to start the planning process is with evidence of district performance, indicating strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. The management team should supply the board with documentation of district-wide performance and present re-

commendations for strengthening the program in areas needing improvement. The board should look for evidence of involvement, starting with the teaching level and continuing right up through the management group, throughout the planning process.

The board's role is to see that the planning is done in an acceptable manner. If management time is inadequate for the planning job, then the basic organization of the district and the adequacy of its management staffing should be questioned. A board can easily be penny-wise and dollar-foolish in not insisting that its management staff plan adequately.

Board members generally agree that planning is a good idea, but often ask how to go about applying it in their own district. In the words of one board member: "I serve on an average school board with an average superintendent. I raise these ideas at a board meeting—planning ahead and so forth—and the superintendent replies, 'We haven't been doing so badly in the past. What are you all shook up about?' My board colleagues say 'Don't make waves.' What I need is more than just the idea that planning would be good for the district."

What can the board do to move its staff toward district-wide planning and programming? The board first should insist that the management team develop a plan for planning—a sequence of reporting practices that unfolds through the school year. For example:

1) In the early spring, the management team presents to the board next year's objectives in such areas as educational programs, finance, personnel, and transportation.

2) In the fall, the management team reports to the board on the specific programs and activities developed to accomplish the objectives of the district.

3) By the end of January, the board receives an inter-

im report on progress toward accomplishing the objectives.

4) In the spring or summer, the board receives a report on accomplishments for the year, conclusions about objectives that should be modified or dropped, and recommendations for a course of action in the following year. The cycle begins anew.

Understanding district performance

Understanding school district performance is essential for effective board planning decisions; therefore, the board should expect and demand from the management team all available indicators of performance, including thorough analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations. The board also needs to understand the nature of the community, its educational needs, and resources. Using these two primary factors, district performance and community needs, the board should establish goals for the district that, along with school and department objectives, provide guidelines for the management team and a basis for appraising performance at all levels.

One essential basis for setting objectives is a clear understanding of the present status of the district. Much as a farmer with a new piece of land needs an analysis of its land use history and its current condition, (soil content, drainage, etc.), so the board of education needs a detailed analysis and explanation of the present status of the school district, plus its history and future plans.

Financial information on the district usually is readily available. More difficult to supply is an understanding of educational performance. How successful is the district in teaching reading, mathematics, and other subjects? What conclusions about performance can be reached from analysis of the district's test data? What

can we learn by comparing scores from year to year and among classrooms and schools?

Test data provide concrete evidence of a district's performance, but several kinds of tests should be examined. Another information source for boards are the opinions of students, parents, and citizens. Unless boards know what consumers think of the schools, they have little basis for planning the future. The opinions of teachers and administrators also are important to give the board an adequate basis for decision making.

Several other quantifiable elements of district performance can be useful: follow-up studies of graduates, drop-out rates, teacher/student ratios, and participation in elective courses. Such information, analyzed and interpreted by the management team, is essential to effective board decision making in terms of plans and objectives for the future. Without this ingredient the board cannot possibly exercise its fundamental responsibility for ensuring satisfactory district performance.

Boards of education get into trouble by making decisions without performance information. The following situations are not uncommon:

1) A high school course is added because a small, vocal community segment believes it is essential. Later, the board finds it cannot finance its basic program. The new addition is cut and the community group becomes angry.

2) Expenditures are made in areas where learning results already are satisfactory (if only the board had known). Corrective action is not taken in areas where performance is unsatisfactory (if only the board had known). Once the children subjected to inadequate educational experiences leave the school system, it is too late for the board to make up for its mistakes.

The management team should present information to

the board in a form that the board member can readily understand (no educational jargon). The information should have been analyzed so that the district's strengths and weaknesses are clearly indicated, with areas for improvement identified. Alternative courses of action should be made available, unless only one approach is clearly feasible. The superintendent should indicate the preferred course of action and the justification for it, along with advantages and disadvantages. Unless the board receives such information, analytical support, and managerial recommendations from the superintendent and his management team, it cannot discharge its own responsibilities effectively.

Information regarding the current status of the district should be shared with teachers, because the primary focus of such information is on the teacher/student relationship. The teacher needs this information to understand the educational performance of students and the effect that the teacher is having on them. Certainly the principals of schools and other managers in the system require a similar understanding of present performance in order to plan future action.

Understanding community needs

The school board must have a thorough understanding of the character and educational needs of its community as another basis for making planning decisions and setting objectives. Here again the board relies heavily on the analytical skills of the management staff. However, the board may well feel itself representative of the community in a way that no professional can be.

A board member's personal contacts with citizens give a definite mind-set on the character, desires, and needs of the public. However, board members must recognize that every community is made up of many publics, and that no individual can know first-hand the needs and desires of them all. Personal viewpoints and

interests must be melded into an interpretation of community needs as a whole if the district is to serve the total community and not just cater to the needs of a few. Individual interpretations and trade-offs are by no means easy. The board member's job involves compromise between alternative programs and interests.

A more direct and scientific approach is for boards to survey the attitudes and interests of the community. The survey technique is used more and more as school boards seek to learn more accurately the attitudes and desires of their communities, levels of satisfaction with present programs, and desires for change or improvement. Districts that apply market research and survey techniques find that the communication established is extremely helpful in planning district objectives. They also find that citizens are apt to be more sympathetic with results if they can be shown that their own assessment of needs was taken into account. The satisfaction of consumers is a fundamental part of appraising the performance of schools.

Perhaps less subtle than the identification of educational needs, but no less important, is an understanding of the financial resources of the community and its attitudes toward school spending. It is ultimately the board's responsibility, not that of the management team, to determine how much the community can afford to spend and how much it is willing to spend for the various educational programs that can be made available.

Larger districts often find that needs and attitudes vary considerably among communities or neighborhoods. The board should study these differences and recognize that educational programs might differ from school to school if community needs are to be adequately reflected in the character of each school. Diversity can be a sign of creativity. The encouragement of individual

initiative within schools can help build morale and improve educational performance of students.

Setting goals and objectives

Based on an understanding of district performance and community needs, goals and objectives for the district should be established. These guide the management team and staff and form the basis for appraising performance in the future. Be cautious, however. It is easy for objectives to become mere platitudes. A clear statement of purpose helps the board and management limit the scope of its endeavors in terms of both programs and financial resources.

The school board should develop objectives for the district in such areas as governance, finance, programs, and personnel. In developing objectives in these areas, the board is giving specific direction to its management staff, specifying the expected outcomes in each area. Objectives should be related to student performance in the district, the quality and kind of programs to be offered, the financial condition of the district, and its policies with respect to employees at all levels. As an example, a board of education might set as an objective that the average student graduating from the eighth grade will read at least at that grade level. The management staff of the district then designs a program to accomplish this result, including whatever changes may be necessary in the current teaching staff and programming. The program is implemented by the staff and, together with the management team, the staff evaluates the success of the program at some later date. A report goes back to the board on the results achieved, along with a recommendation for changing or continuing the objective. This is a simple example, but one which should be duplicated in several areas of district performance.

The board should recognize that its role is in providing over-all guidance for the district, and not hold to it-

self the entire process of setting objectives and making decisions. To put these tasks in the proper perspective, board members must realize that written purposes, objectives, and policies are not a substitute for running the district. They are not synonymous with the real-life, ongoing activities and operations of the district. It is too easy to have neat and tidy purposes, objectives, and policies while failing to have any impact on actual operations. Conversely, it is possible to run a first-rate educational program with little in the way of written rules and regulations.

Written purposes, objectives, and policies are at best a way of ensuring that such matters are attended to and recorded for future reference. At worst, however, they can become substitutes for substantive attention to the real issues and actual operations of the district. Objective setting and performance monitoring represent a way to understand the operations of the district. Keeping this distinction in mind is important.

1) **Setting objectives** and monitoring performance are only part of the decision-making and problem-solving processes. Identifying the decisions that need to be made, marshalling evidence, defining issues, and putting all this together in a way that arrives at the right answers to the right questions is an art that simply cannot be reduced to a mechanical process as simple as deciding what ought to be accomplished and looking afterwards to see if it has been.

2) **The process of setting objectives** and monitoring performance is a repeating one. The cycle can be as short as a few days or as long as a few years. The process may well be more important than the end products of it, and the board should recognize that finishing the process is not the aim—guiding the district and accomplishing its end results is.

3) The process takes place at all levels of the organization—the board not necessarily being the most important. In fact, the teacher/student relationship probably is the most important level, and board members should see that several levels are involved, including team leaders, department heads, principals, district level personnel, and the superintendent. The complexity of the process in a real-life situation with ongoing operations and real people should be obvious. The need for definition of structure, responsibilities, and procedures is not to mechanize the process, but simply to bring a reasonable degree of order and discipline.

Board members should not fail to do their part in the objective-setting /performance monitoring process. At the same time, they should understand that it is far more important for the process to take place at the teacher/ student level of the organization and to work its way up, than it is for it to happen at the top of the organization and work its way down. In organizations of all kinds, the creativity and initiative must come mainly from the working level and not only from the superstructure.

The board plays an essential role in bringing the whole planning process together on a district-wide basis, and especially in demanding that the planning process be developed in the first place. But the planning process must pervade the organization and be built up through the various levels. In the final analysis, participation at management and teaching levels is far more important than the board's role in terms of impact on students.

Planning finances and facilities

When most school board members think of planning, they focus on enrollment, facilities, and finance. While educational planning deserves highest priority, these planning areas today present a considerably greater

challenge to school boards than they have in the past. More sophisticated information is required to support board and management decisions in the face of complex enrollment projections and facility planning and financial uncertainties. While enrollment and facilities require a different emphasis on planning from the educational planning process described previously, the two must be linked together. The availability of funds and classrooms has a decided impact on the education process—and educational needs should determine financial and classroom needs.

Projecting enrollment

Every school board should have a set of thorough projections on future school enrollments. Retention ratios extending enrollment levels from year to year usually provide a reasonably accurate beginning point. They should look back as much as a decade, and forward at least five years. Typically these provide a surprisingly accurate basis for predictions of one-year and two-year enrollments. Unless a school district is in a period of dramatic change, they often prove adequate for five-year and ten-year projections as well.

Planning information available from city, county, and regional planning agencies should be used fully by school district managers. Information from these agencies includes population growth and projections; analysis of changes in births, deaths, and migration; age distribution of the population; school enrollment as a percentage of population; number of housing starts; history and projections of family size; planned zoning density, and capacity for growth (including saturation limits, land availability, data on private school enrollment, economic trends and conditions, and availability of sewers and other public facilities). Along with such information, professional skills often can be borrowed from these agencies for analysis and interpretation. Be-

cause the expenditure of substantial amounts of money often is contingent on enrollment projections, school boards should demand thorough and continual planning and analysis. The need to obtain information is one reason why school boards need a good working relationship with other units of local government.

In school districts with stable or steadily growing enrollment, the board should expect at least an annual report on enrollment trends. Where more dramatic changes are occurring in enrollment, the board should examine more frequent projections and analyze the probable impact on programs, staffing, and finances. Efficient school facility utilization is tied closely to the accuracy of enrollment projections.

Analyzing facility needs

Most school boards and managers are accustomed to growth situations in which additions to classroom capacity represent the major problem. For districts with excess classrooms, the problem is strikingly different. Long lead times are required if school districts are to close school buildings without undue disruption. Community controversies often result from efforts to close schools. But careful analysis of the costs and benefits of closing buildings must be weighed against the possibility that changes in neighborhoods or birth rates could produce growth again in the future. Districts that sell unneeded buildings today may find themselves having to purchase new facilities at much higher cost in the future.

What is the school board member's job in facility planning, remodeling, construction, or school closing? The need for construction or remodeling must be recognized by the board and agreed upon by the public (through their approval of a bond issue to finance the project). Facility planning is destined to fail unless there is a consensus that facility changes are needed. The board

should review staff planning on the philosophy of education, develop procedures for construction or remodeling, and fix responsibility for planning and supervising the project itself. A tentative and realistic time schedule should be developed for each project.

Declining enrollments in school districts often present school boards with the problem of closing a school. Many boards and superintendents discover that the public is willing to accept the decision that a school needs to be closed—as long as it isn't in their neighborhood. Emotions inevitably get involved in school closings, and the conflict becomes unduly time consuming for the board and management team. Yet, the board cannot shirt its fundamental responsibility to operate the school district efficiently.

The decision to close a school must be based on factual information and justifiable in terms of long-term trends and needs. It is best to establish a base of factual information before getting public participation. Without a factual base, public involvement becomes an emotional wrangle, pitting parent against parent, neighbor against neighbor. The board must accept ultimate responsibility for the decision and protect its management team from unnecessary public criticism. Once the facts are gathered and organized, a communications effort should be launched with the staff, students, parents directly affected, and even taxpayers who do not have children in school.

Boards considering a school closing should also consider other opportunities for cost reduction. For example, it may be beneficial financially and educationally to alter class size or vary expenditures per student according to school size or need. Attention to these two aspects of financial planning may affect the advantages and disadvantages of closing schools.

The final determination of which schools to close and

when must be made by the board on the basis of facts, logic, and judgments. Key elements seem to be sufficient lead time and the incontestability of evidence used to defend the school closing.

Keeping track of funds

The growing uncertainty of funds from state and federal sources makes thoughtful analysis and projection all the more critical. While the outcome of transitions in school finance is by no means clear, it appears that states will continue to finance a larger portion of the cost of education and thus will reduce the flexibility of local school boards. At the same time, laws designed to ease property tax burdens and the growing disenchantment with taxes in general make it increasingly difficult for school districts to raise funds from local sources.

What should the school board expect from its management team in financial planning? At least annually, the board should receive projections for the coming year (in detail) and for at least the next five years. The projections should be accompanied by an estimated inflation factor. From these projections the board should be able to determine whether (a) enough money will be available to operate the district, or (b) it will want to seek new revenues or plan cutbacks in education programs. In either case, what the board determines should be communicated to both the public and the staff. Many boards will require increased sophistication in their financial planning capabilities if the accuracy of the long-range projections is to be satisfactory. The forecasting requirements that districts must meet today exceed what was typically required in the past when local control over financial resources was greater and enrollment growth was more certain.

Quarterly (in some districts monthly), the board should receive reports on current spending in all funds

compared to the previous year and to the budget. Reports concerning income from various sources should be available and should make clear how the pattern compares with previous years and with expectations. These reports should be simple and comprehensible.

At least monthly, the board should expect an easy-to-understand financial statement that shows cash, investments, and fund balances. Supplementary information on the types of investments, amounts, and rates of interest should be reported, with indication of any opportunities to increase resources by more prudent investments. Many boards follow the useful practice of having one member review in advance all bills to be submitted for approval at the monthly board meetings. Such detailed examination of district expenditures has proven a useful safeguard. Delegating the job to one board member on a rotating basis is one approach that saves board time. Once a year, the board should insist upon (most states require it) an independent audit by a state agency or a private firm.

Budgeting

School boards should require thorough analysis of budgets wherever possible. They should not hesitate to ask pointed questions of the superintendent and management team during the budgeting process. The opportunity for analysis of educational expenditures and their relationship to performance, particularly in such areas as the use of professional staff outside the classroom, is important for every district. Boards should focus on certain key ratios (such as teacher/student ratios) to ensure that their districts are not spending beyond prudent levels and that expenditure patterns reflect an intentional strategy on the part of the management team to achieve educational results. Evidence to support the correlation of educational performance with high expenditures, with heavy use of per-

sonnel outside the classroom, and with low pupil/teacher ratios is not very strong. Board members should demand that a case be convincing before they accept such budget recommendations.

When the superintendent proposes a balanced school budget (without borrowing), the board should be pleased—but its job is not over. Even in this situation the board must determine whether the superintendent is proposing too great an expenditure or not enough. Could the district's program be financed at a lower level without damaging educational results? Has the superintendent cut deeply into the program just to balance the budget and jeopardized achievement of the district's educational purposes? These are questions that the board and the management team must consider as they strive to reach sound decisions.

Typically, a school board is faced with inflation, employee demands, and state mandates that available revenues are unable to support. In these situations the board must decide whether to borrow funds and create a deficit budget or make cuts in educational programs. Either requires a planned communications effort to both the public and staff, so they can understand the board's decision and plan for dealing with the problem.

Linking plans to performance

Both educational planning and finance/facilities planning must be related to district objectives and performance if the school district is to run smoothly. Bringing together the educational planning of the district with its enrollment, finance, and facilities projections and the budgeting process is a difficult management task requiring a substantial part of the superintendent's time and effort. The board must make sure this process occurs and recognize that staff time must be devoted to it. To do this, the board asks the right questions to ensure that the community's desires

are considered, that the board's objectives are provided for, and that low-priority programs are dropped.

Educational planning is a complex yet promising method of giving taxpayers their money's worth. But comprehensive planning is time-consuming and probably will have to be accomplished over a period of years.

8/Information for decision making

Board members often find themselves better able to make decisions concerning building maintenance or lunch programs than about reading or math programs. Information usually is available about support services, and little if any about educational programs.

Consider how school transportation information systems usually work: The school staff determines the number, age, and location of students; bus capacities and operating costs, and the condition of roads—all bearing on the board's transportation policies. If conditions change and the policy is no longer satisfactory or it is implemented badly, the information is fed back quickly to the staff and to the board, the policy is corrected, and service is adjusted. Changing conditions such as age and location of students, number of drivers, etc., continue to be reported routinely to the board so that changes can be made in policy or procedure.

What boards and their management teams need is a similar information feedback system for the education program. The system would gather, summarize, and analyze at regular intervals all available evidence of the degree to which defined district educational goals are being attained. The information may be judgmental and subjective, or it may be objective and quantitative. The reports may be compiled frequently or at long intervals. In any event, the information should be interpreted by the management team to provide the board with the basis for decision making.

School board information

Most school board members lack even the kind of

basic information available to a stockholder of a public company in an annual report. Consequently, it isn't surprising that they are often uncertain whether the school district is floating or sinking. Given this uncertainty, it is difficult to be confident and responsible in decision making and in holding oneself accountable to the public.

Nothing is more reassuring to boards in any field than objective, quantitative information that comes to the board independent of the administrators concerned. In a business, the board would certainly be lost without access to sales, market and financial information, including the auditing procedures that ensure its reasonable accuracy. School boards lacking information are timid in trying to convince the public that their schools are performing well and deserve funding. And they are likely to be uncomfortable in making decisions about staffing and salaries, particularly at administrative levels where they are not yet obliged to engage in a formal bargaining process. Such uncertainty can be catastrophic to a district's public relations as well as its finances. Compensation levels that are set in an atmosphere of conflict and frustration diminish staff morale rather than contribute to it, usually without any actual savings.

The pressures on school board members to take action to correct this problem are strong. Publicity about declining test scores heightens both parental interest and board concern. But the need goes deeper than just meeting parental concern. It is essential to convince the public that a good job is being done and instill a sense of responsibility for performance on the part of the staff. Information and evaluation must be a mutual interest of board, administrators, and teachers if the district is to be funded, viewed with respect by its public, and satisfying to its staff.

Neither the nature of education nor the technical difficulties of measuring performance preclude taking action. Rather, the major obstacle is the inexperience of administrators and teachers with evaluation and their uneasiness in sharing relevant and understandable information with the board. The information needed by school boards is neither complex nor expensive to obtain. It includes these five principal components:

1) Student learning, for which the best indicator usually is the objective analysis of achievement tests. Virtually all districts have test data available, but they are rarely analyzed. When they are, the analysis can reveal extremely useful indications of student learning.

2) Consumer satisfaction, which can be inexpensively assessed through simple surveys of parents, students, and the community.

3) Basic control information: class sizes, cost and staffing ratios, resource allocation.

4) Staff feedback, through surveys of staff opinions.

5) Other indicators, such as attendance and dropout rates.

For the most part the underlying data required are already available, e.g., test score results. Or they can be obtained at minimal cost, for example, through simple surveys of parents, students, and teachers. The information required is itemized in *Figure 8*, along with some simple, practical examples of action to develop it. This list is not exhaustive, but focuses on essential information that every school board should be receiving on a regular basis. The information should have an independent and objective quality that gives the board confidence in district performance.

How substantial are the differences that these data would reflect among districts and schools? *Figure 9*

Figure 8—Information for the School Board on District Educational Performance

1) STUDENT LEARNING

Analysis of achievement tests and other data

- Annual increases
- Historical trends
- National/local comparisons
- Inter-school comparisons
- High school placement

2) CONSUMER SATISFACTION

Surveys to measure satisfaction and identify concerns

- Community
- Parents
- Students

3) BASIC CONTROL INFORMATION class sizes, cost and staffing ratios, resource allocation

4) STAFF FEEDBACK surveys of staff opinions

5) OTHER INDICATORS such as attendance and dropout rates

EXAMPLES

- Comparative analysis of scores on college entrance examinations
- Calculation of annual net gains in achievement test scores, past years compared to current year
- Teachers calculate net gain on achievement test to be expected for their classroom, based on past achievement, I.Q. and special problems, for later comparison with actual scores for same group
- Parent survey identifies perceived problems, such as student discipline. Later survey shows whether problem was corrected.
- Community survey identifies interests of citizens without children in school; e.g., sound basic education programs, sustaining real estate values, opposition to "frills," basis for district financial planning, public relations
- Teacher survey: an opportunity for teachers to evaluate the board, superintendent, principals; useful feedback, good communication
- Survey of children: is school liked? teacher respected? Evaluative information is useful to board, teachers, principals
- Descriptive reports, by principals and department heads with staff participation, documenting needs or problems and suggesting action

presents a simple but dramatic comparison of average reading levels in four districts. As this comparison shows, District A gained nine years in reading ability over a seven year period, while District C gained only

Figure 9—Comparison of Gains in Reading Levels

	Grade 1 Reading Scores (grade level equivalent)	Grade 8 Reading Scores (grade level equivalent)	Net Change Grade 1 through Grade 8
District A	2	11	9
District B	1	8	7
District C	1	6	5
District D	2	8	6

five years. Obviously, the contrast in performance is dramatic. Of course, this simple analysis cannot reveal the useful indications that could be gained by extending it to individual grade levels, schools and classrooms, which is quite easy to do and may suggest even wider variations.

It is important to note that many factors influence the gains in reading levels. One factor is the amount of effort (including dollars) devoted to the reading program. Also influential are the kinds of pupils involved—their basic abilities, socio-economic levels, and the like.

Consumer and staff surveys typically reveal even wider differences than do student test scores. Studies of class sizes, costs, staffing ratios, and other basic control information will also show substantial differences.

Equally important to the information is the accompanying description, interpretation, and recommendations from the district's administrators.

Despite the apparent need for educational performance information, some board members and administrators are leery of it. They believe that it's risky. What if the public misinterprets the information? What if it proves embarrassing to the staff or to the administration—maybe even critical of past board actions? Are safeguards possible? Can boards and administrators deal with the problems they discover once this information is available? How useful will it be—if at

all—in planning future actions and evaluating current programs and personnel?

These concerns are legitimate and they don't all spring from the desire to protect incompetence or to avoid facing problems. It is, in fact, quite possible that:

1) The public may misinterpret information if it is raw test data and if the management team doesn't analyze the information and explain to the board and the public what the information means. Also, the board must inform the public of the action it plans to correct weaknesses.

2) An information system will at times prove critical of people and programs dear to the hearts of the management team, the teaching staff, and even board members. This doesn't mean that the information system is at fault, however. The fault may lie in the way information is interpreted or communicated, or the program may not be as worthwhile as some think it is.

3) Safeguards to protect individual district employees from unfair impressions should leave ample room for tempered judgment, but should not be used to cover up poor performance. When problems are discovered, the board should give credit for the discovery rather than apologize for it. Learning about a program deficiency enables the board to take action to correct it.

No system involving human behavior is foolproof. But a school board can get a variety of information to help it do its job better. What specific types of information provide the foundation for performance evaluation and decision making by the board? As an example, information provided to the board in one district includes: (1) representative opinions from parents and other citizens, students, teachers, and staff; (2) student educational performance—standardized tests, local tests, and other indicators; (3) personnel information, including

performance appraisal, and (4) financial and budgeting information.

Consumer and staff opinions

Parents and Other Citizens—If school boards want to learn what parents and other citizens think about their schools, they must reach out to gather their opinions. For example, one school board and its Association of Parents and Teachers joined hands to study community opinion after a referendum defeat. A follow-up survey was made two years later. Both questionnaires were professionally designed to solicit a wide range of information and a preplanned comparison. (Well-developed skills are essential in the design and analysis of a community survey if the results are to be useful.)

The cover letter and four-part survey used by the district are shown in *Figure 10*. The first part seeks reactions to statements having over-all significance, ranging from "the board of education acts in the best interest of my child" to "the bus service is adequate." The second portion of the survey focuses on individual schools. Parents were asked to respond to such statements as "my child likes school this year" and "this school is helping my child develop self-respect and respect for others." Other items in this section solicited responses about the amount of homework, emphasis on basic skills development, report cards, and discipline standards. The third section is less structured. Parents were asked to describe specific aspects of the district that they liked the best and the least. Even though this section was less structured, useful observations were collected. The fourth section, discussed later (*Figure 12*), allowed parents to comment on the performance of their children's teachers.

The board and administrative staff used findings of the first survey to make a number of changes in district operations. The second survey measured the impact of

Figure 10—Parent Questionnaire

Dear Parents:

The schools in our community really belong to you, the parents. Therefore, your reactions and your thoughts are needed by us to make better decisions and plans. Please help us improve the school system by completing the following questionnaire, based upon your experiences. The questionnaire need not be signed, and someone will be available to assist you, should you need help. PART I—OVERALL REACTION—of the questionnaire should be filled out only once. PART II—BUILDING REACTION—should be completed for every school in which you have children enrolled. Thank you for your cooperation.

PART I—OVERALL REACTION

Indicate beside each of the following statements how much you agree or disagree with the statements by placing a mark (X) in the blank. If you have more than one child in our school district, base your answers on a combination of their school experiences this year.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1) This school district places enough importance on basic skills and academic achievement of students.	____	____	____	____
2) Given the resources available, the schools have been managed effectively.	____	____	____	____
3) I am pleased with the education my child is receiving in school.	____	____	____	____
4) The school facilities (building, equipment, play areas, etc.) meet my child's needs.	____	____	____	____
5) As a parent, I favor the merit pay system which bases salary increases on a teacher's overall performance.	____	____	____	____
6) Parents have an opportunity to become informed about school programs through school publications, the local press and meetings with teachers and administrators.	____	____	____	____

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
7) As a parent, I have opportunities to express my feelings about by child's education.	____	____	____	____
8) Student bus services are satisfactory.	____	____	____	____
9) The student lunch program meets my child's needs.	____	____	____	____

PART II--BUILDING REACTION

Part II of the questionnaire should be completed for each building in which you have a child enrolled. If you have more than one child in this school building, base your answers on a combination of their experiences in this school.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1) My child likes school this year.	____	____	____	____
2) In this school, my child has well qualified and effective teachers.	____	____	____	____
3) In this school, my child is learning at a satisfactory rate skills in the basic areas of				
Mathematics	____	____	____	____
Science	____	____	____	____
Social Studies	____	____	____	____
Language Arts (composition and oral communication)	____	____	____	____
Music	____	____	____	____
Art	____	____	____	____
Physical Education	____	____	____	____
Foreign Language	____	____	____	____
Related Arts	____	____	____	____

continued

Figure 10 *continued*

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
4) In this school, class sizes have insured sufficient individual attention for my child.	____	____	____	____
5) I am satisfied with the amount of homework my child has at this school.	____	____	____	____
6) In this school, my child's teachers seem sincerely concerned about how well he or she is doing.	____	____	____	____
7) In this school, parent-teacher conferences have provided me with helpful information about my child's progress.	____	____	____	____
8) The student discipline standards in this school are acceptable.	____	____	____	____
9) The report card used is helpful in communicating my child's progress.	____	____	____	____
10) The new study skills program assists my child in learning how to study, plan and organize his work.	____	____	____	____
11) Existing classroom exposure to family life and health education information meets my child's needs.	____	____	____	____
12) Additional student services, i.e., speech therapy, learning disabilities and psychological counseling are meeting my child's needs.	____	____	____	____

PART III—ADDITIONAL COMMENTS—If you have any additional comments about the schools, please make them here.

these changes on public opinion. For example:

1) In the first survey, 81 percent of the parents felt the district's public information program was adequate, and 19 percent considered it inadequate. The district then hired a part-time public relations person and initiated a bi-weekly column in the local newspaper and a bi-monthly newsletter for all residents. As a result, the survey two years later showed that 93 percent of the parents responded positively to the statement "parents have an opportunity to become informed about school programs through school publications and the local press."

2) Also in the first survey, more than one-third of the parents polled felt that parent/teacher communication was inadequate. Only 74 percent felt that methods for reporting pupil progress were adequate. Board, staff, and the parent/teacher association committees began to study these areas. Alternative methods for parent/teacher conferences were offered for the first time on a district-wide basis. Pupil progress report forms were revised. Two years later the favorable response to the statement "parent/ teacher conferences have provided me with helpful information about my child's progress" had grown to 95 percent, and the favorable response to the statement "the report card used is helpful in communicating my child's progress" had risen to 90 percent.

3) Only 68 percent of the parents in the first survey said that district schools were providing adequate individual attention to students. After developing well-equipped and well-staffed media centers in all buildings, and providing in-service training in courses aimed at increasing individualized instruction, the percentage of parents responding positively to the item relating to individualized instruction grew to 82.

Other categories in which parental responses were substantially improved in the second survey were:

quality of reading instruction, discipline standards, instilling the learning process, and administrative performance. In all cases, specific changes relating to these areas were made during the two-year interim between studies. The second survey in some respects was more valuable than the first, because it provided a reference point for future comparisons. Repeating surveys regularly is an essential element in any management information system.

Students—The student is the most important consumer of every school program and, therefore, should have regular opportunities to report impressions of teachers and schools. The questions and techniques involved in surveying students are simple and straightforward, although the interpretation of the information is more complicated.

Figure 11 shows the student questionnaire used by one district in grades two and three, as well as the responses of a class of 19 children. To collect information of this kind from young children, the principal usually administers the questionnaire to the class, explaining that the information will be helpful to the teacher in improving his or her teaching. If the children are not capable of reading the questionnaire, the principal reads it to the class. He also assures the children that the teacher will not see their individual responses. Once the questionnaires were filled out, they were machine-scored and the teacher presented with a summary of pupil responses, which was compared with the teacher's own self-assessment.

The two right hand columns of *Figure 11* present the class average and the teacher's self-evaluation. Obviously, no hard and fast conclusions can be drawn from such comparisons, but the information is of great value to the teacher in understanding how her class views her.

Once such information is assembled, the teacher and

principal review the data together. Favorable implications of the data are discussed, of course, but the principal's major task is to help the teacher develop alternative ways to improve performance where necessary.

With older children, more complicated questions can be used. At the high school level, student judgment should become a more mature reflection of teacher performance. The rationale for using teacher and student feedback is that communication with students is essential to learning. A measure of the teacher's success in achieving objectives in class is the first step in helping that teacher do a better job. However, having the information is not enough. The teacher's immediate supervisor should help interpret and apply the information. The teacher then should make specific plans for improvement. Most people have difficulty being objective about their own performance; however, performance information from multiple sources encourages objectivity. Counseling with the teacher on the implications, even where performance is extremely good, is essential. In fact, such information is usually of greatest value to the better teachers.

Student feedback should be constructive and have a positive effect on staff morale. Teachers find the information valuable in self-development, and principals find that it supplements their judgment in determining the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. The use of such information requires maturity and common sense on the part of the teaching staff and the management team, so that it is constructive and healthy and not a disruptive factor in teacher/management relations.

To supplement the opinions of students, a few districts provide an opportunity for parents to voice their opinions on the performance of teachers. Parent feedback is another source of information for teachers as well as management. *Figure 12* is a questionnaire used

Figure 11—Student Questionnaire—A Summary of Responses

	Never	Almost Never	Some-Times	Almost Always	Always	No Response	Total	Average	Self Rating
1) My teacher explains things so that I understand them.	0	0	4	8	7	0	19	4.16	5.00
2) My teacher treats everyone fairly.	0	0	1	4	14	0	19	4.68	5.00
3) The kids in my class behave.	0	0	13	5	1	0	19	3.37	4.00
4) My teacher is friendly toward all students.	0	0	0	6	13	0	19	4.68	5.00
5) My teacher makes school seem fun and interesting.	0	0	6	5	8	0	19	4.11	4.00
6) My teacher laughs and enjoys jokes in the classroom.	2	1	5	7	4	0	19	3.53	4.00
7) My teacher enjoys teaching school.	0	0	1	8	10	0	19	4.47	4.00
8) My teacher lets students tell about their ideas in class.	0	1	8	6	4	0	19	3.68	5.00

9) I do interesting things in my teacher's class.	0	1	7	6	5	0	19	3.79	5.00
10) My teacher looks neat and dresses nicely.	0	0	1	2	16	0	19	4.79	5.00
11) My teacher controls his/her anger.	0	0	3	7	9	0	19	4.32	4.00
12) My teacher is able to answer questions about school work.	0	0	1	3	15	0	19	4.74	4.00
13) My teacher thinks what I say is important.	0	0	7	12	0	0	19	3.63	5.00
14) My teacher likes me.	0	0	4	6	9	0	19	4.26	5.00
15) My teacher wants me to ask questions and give ideas in class.	0	1	6	7	5	0	19	3.84	5.00
16) I feel free to give my ideas in class.	1	0	8	6	4	0	19	3.63	5.00
17) I feel like I learn a lot in class.	0	1	1	9	8	0	19	4.26	4.00
18) I think my teacher is a good teacher.	0	0	1	0	18	0	19	4.89	5.00

Figure 12—Parent Feedback on Teacher Performance

DIRECTIONS—SECTION 1

List below the name of your child's classroom techer and comment on his or her performance by placing a mark (X) in the appropriate blank.

School _____

Teacher's name _____

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
1) Presents subject matter clearly	____	____	____	____	____
2) Maintains discipline	____	____	____	____	____
3) Motivates and encourages students	____	____	____	____	____
4) Communicates effectively with parents	____	____	____	____	____
5) Establishes realistic standards of achievement	____	____	____	____	____
6) Emphasizes basic skills development	____	____	____	____	____
7) Plans appropriate assignments for individual children	____	____	____	____	____

DIRECTIONS—SECTION 2

Place a mark (X) in the appropriate blank indicating how well you believe the following teachers have performed this past school year.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Special personnel					
Ms. Jones (Vocal Music)	____	____	____	____	____
Ms. Black (Art)	____	____	____	____	____
Mr. Brown (Physical Education)	____	____	____	____	____
Ms. White (Girl's Physical Education)	____	____	____	____	____
Mr. Gray (Media Center)	____	____	____	____	____
If applicable:					
Ms. Smith (Learning Disabilities)	____	____	____	____	____
Ms. Baker (Special Education)	____	____	____	____	____
Ms. Clay (Speech Correction)	____	____	____	____	____
Mr. Frank (Case-worker)	____	____	____	____	____
Ms. Henry (Title I, Reading)	____	____	____	____	____
Mr. Bench (Music)	____	____	____	____	____
Mr. Sims (Music)	____	____	____	____	____

If your child has had any other teachers this year about whom you wish to comment, list their names and follow the instructions for above.

_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____	____	____

If you have additional comments regarding any of your responses above, kindly use the back of this page.

in one school district for this purpose. The information, combined with student opinions, provides a more balanced picture of the impression the teacher is making. Obviously, parents cannot be expected to be totally competent judges of the teacher's performance in terms of results, but most educational administrators appreciate the importance of satisfied parents in the operation of schools. Many teachers find that knowing parents' feelings is helpful in understanding their own strengths and weaknesses and in modifying their behavior.

Feedback from both parents and students should be recorded, charted if possible, and shared with teachers. Individual responses of each student should be carefully disguised and not discussed. Summaries or over-all impressions should be used instead. Also, parents and student opinions should be part of a comprehensive program of staff appraisal. Often such input substantiates observations that professional evaluators make without the data. But substantiation helps make the evidence convincing to the teacher, whose understanding and acceptance is essential to any change in behavior.

Teachers and Staff—The attitudes and opinions of teachers are as critical to over-all educational performance as their basic competence. Yet, in many districts, particularly under collective bargaining, communication channels between the teachers, management team and school board are often strained or closed. Under any circumstances, it is important to have continuing access to teacher opinions as an integral part of the district's management information system. A clear, firsthand impression regarding how teachers feel is indispensable to the management team. These observations can be supplemented with formal surveys that give teachers a chance to express their feel-

ings regarding how the school district is administered. In this way, the staff provides the management team and the board with an over-all impression of district-wide and individual building operations.

An example of one such questionnaire is shown in *Figure 13*. Three categories of information are generated at the district level: district organization; the superintendent; and the board of education. Under "district organization," the staff evaluates such areas as district-wide meetings for in-service training and program co-ordination and teacher involvement in district decision making. Responses in this category help both the board and management team plan improvements.

In examining how they are viewed by the teaching staff, the superintendent and board of education find some useful suggestions for improving district objectives, policies, and their own performance and behavior.

Many items in the survey are geared to individual buildings, particularly principal and teacher relationships. The primary measure of any manager is the performance of his staff, and this certainly applies to the relationship between principal and teachers. Feedback from teachers tells the board and management team how well their policies are being implemented and the impact of those policies on staff relationships.

One result of the survey illustrated here was the restructuring of district in-service training to focus on individual school needs rather than to design one program for all. Specific objectives and goals for building principals took into account the feedback provided in the survey. Examples of objectives included more time for the observing of teachers in the classroom and using planned agendas to shorten staff meetings.

With union efforts to control school operations, it is essential that the management team and the board know the staffs concerns, hopes, and aspirations. The

Figure 13—Teacher Questionnaire

CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTRICT

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Too Often
A. District Organization				
1) District-wide meetings for inservice and program coordination are effective	____	____	____	____
2) The District Bulletin is worthwhile	____	____	____	____
3) Teachers generally read the District Bulletin.	____	____	____	____
4) If a teacher desires, he has opportunities for input in district decision making	____	____	____	____
5) Generally, administrators in our district stay too long	____	____	____	____
6) Staff members are concerned about the image of the school in the community	____	____	____	____
7) Paraprofessional personnel are readily available for teachers' use	____	____	____	____
B. Superintendent				
1) The superintendent spends too much time dealing with "principal" matters	____	____	____	____
2) The superintendent is too business-like in his dealings with staff members	____	____	____	____
3) The superintendent is available to teachers when needed	____	____	____	____

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Too Often
4) The superintendent and other administrative staff complement each other, making a good team.	____	____	____	____
5) The superintendent spends adequate time clarifying teachers' roles and expectations.	____	____	____	____
6) The superintendent is too casual in his dealings with faculty members.	____	____	____	____
7) The superintendent is interested in the general welfare of the staff.	____	____	____	____
8) The superintendent spends adequate time in public relations with the staff.	____	____	____	____
C. Board of Education				
1) The board of education acts in the best interests of the students to improve the quality of education in the district.	____	____	____	____
2) The board of education acts in the best interests of the teachers.	____	____	____	____
3) Given the resources available, the board of education and the administrators manage our schools effectively.	____	____	____	____

Portions of this questionnaire were adapted from the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire of Andrew W. Halpin, which appeared in his book, *Theory and Research in Administration* (1966), McMillan Company, New York.

continued

Figure 13 *continued*

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRINCIPAL

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Too Often
A. Aloofness				
1) Teachers eat lunch by themselves in their own classrooms.	____	____	____	____
2) Teachers are contacted by the principal each day.	____	____	____	____
3) Teachers leave the grounds during the school day.	____	____	____	____
4) The rules set by the principal are never questioned.	____	____	____	____
5) The principal runs the faculty meeting like a business conference.	____	____	____	____
6) Faculty meetings are organized according to a tight agenda.	____	____	____	____
7) Faculty meetings are mainly principal-report meetings.	____	____	____	____
8) Teachers are informed of the results of a principal's visit.	____	____	____	____
9) Teachers' meetings should be attended by teachers only, and not classified personnel.	____	____	____	____
B. Production Emphasis				
1) The principal makes all class-scheduling decisions.	____	____	____	____

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Too Often
2) The principal talks a great deal	____	____	____	____
3) Extra duty for teachers is allocated evenly	____	____	____	____
4) The principal schedules the work for teachers	____	____	____	____
5) The principal corrects teachers' mistakes	____	____	____	____
6) The principal is aware of each teachers' ability to convey subject matter	____	____	____	____
7) The principal insures that teachers work to their full capacity	____	____	____	____
C. Thrust				
1) The principal goes out of his way to help teachers	____	____	____	____
2) The principal sets an example by working hard himself	____	____	____	____
3) The principal uses constructive criticism	____	____	____	____
4) The principal is well prepared when he speaks at school functions	____	____	____	____
5) The principal criticizes a specific act rather than an individual	____	____	____	____

continued

Figure 13 *continued*

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Too Often
6) The principal explains his reasons for criticism to teachers.	____	____	____	____
7) The principal looks out for personal welfare of teachers.	____	____	____	____
8) The principal tells teachers of new ideas he has run across.	____	____	____	____
9) The principal is easy to understand.	____	____	____	____
10) The principal is in the buildings beyond the hours for teachers.	____	____	____	____
D Consideration				
1) The principal helps teachers solve personal problems.	____	____	____	____
2) The principal does personal favors for teachers.	____	____	____	____
3) The principal helps staff members settle minor differences.	____	____	____	____
4) Teachers help select which basic program will be taught.	____	____	____	____
5) The principal tries to get better salaries for teachers.	____	____	____	____
6) The principal clarifies wrong ideas a teacher may have.	____	____	____	____
7) The principal makes himself readily available to help teachers.	____	____	____	____

teacher's professional judgment and opinions represent an important asset to any district.

Allowing one's self to be evaluated by subordinates requires a certain amount of courage, of course. This is especially true in school districts where union organizers plant seeds of discontent among employees at the same time they are running campaigns to elect friendly school board members. The pitfalls should be obvious—and nothing could be more unethical for a board member than to abuse this approach to management appraisal.

Student educational performance

Another major area of management information is student educational performance based upon standardized achievement tests. Test results are gathered by school administrators almost everywhere, but adequate use of these results is rare. That is unfortunate. Achievement testing can provide clear insights into what students know in specific areas and how much they learn each year.

Particularly in grades one through eight, and in schools where basic skills are emphasized, the student testing program should be a major component of management information. Typically, students are tested at the same time each year and the amount of growth from the preceding year is calculated. Then the performance of each class can be compared to other classes at the same grade level in that building and throughout the district, taking into account differences in student abilities and the relevance of the test to the district's curriculum. Scores alone mean little; comparative data and careful analysis are essential.

To take one district's testing program as an example, the school board receives three kinds of information. First, the district's over-all performance as measured by a recognized national achievement test is reported to

the board each fall. Results are summarized in clear terms through the use of stanines, reflecting values on a nine point scale of normalized standard scores. Scores are thus expressed along a scale ranging from a low of one to a high of nine, with the value five representing average performance for the national norm group. The value nine corresponds to the 96th percentile (and above) and means the group is in the top four percent nationally as measured by the instrument used. *Figure 14* shows the results. Because this information is available for several years, the board has a broad picture of district performance and how it is changing over time.

The board in this district also receives a report for each grade level on student learning gains during the year (from fall to spring). *Figure 15* shows the district's results for grade one. The columns include the name of each subtest, the pretest grade equivalent score, the post-test grade equivalent score, the amount of gain expressed in months, and the expected gain computed in

Figure 14 – School Group Stanine Scores

	GRADE LEVEL							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Vocabulary	7	7	6	7	7	6	7	5
Reading	7	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reading Comprehension	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	5
Word Skills	7	7	7	7	6	7	-	-
Math Concepts	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	5
Math Computation	6	6	6	6	4	7	7	5
Math Application	-	7	7	7	6	7	7	7
Spelling	-	7	7	7	5	7	6	7
Language	-	-	6	7	5	6	7	6
Social Science	-	7	7	7	6	7	6	6
Sciences	-	7	7	6	4	7	6	5
Listening Comprehension	7	7	7	7	6	6	-	-

two different ways. The expected gain (in parentheses in the "expectancy" column) is based upon the achievement test norms using the district's group IQ average score. The gain score (not in parentheses) is based on a formula for expected performance using the pretest score and extending it forward to allow for the time during the year. Both of these figures provide an estimate of how much gain should be expected. Both figures can be compared with the actual post-test results. To aid in understanding the growth for the district, board members receive graphs for each grade level that compare performance at the beginning and the end of the year (*Figure 16*).

The board is not given specific information on each teacher. however, this information is provided to the principal and he is charged with working with the teacher if the results indicate difficulty in achieving expectations. If the table in *Figure 15* reflected one

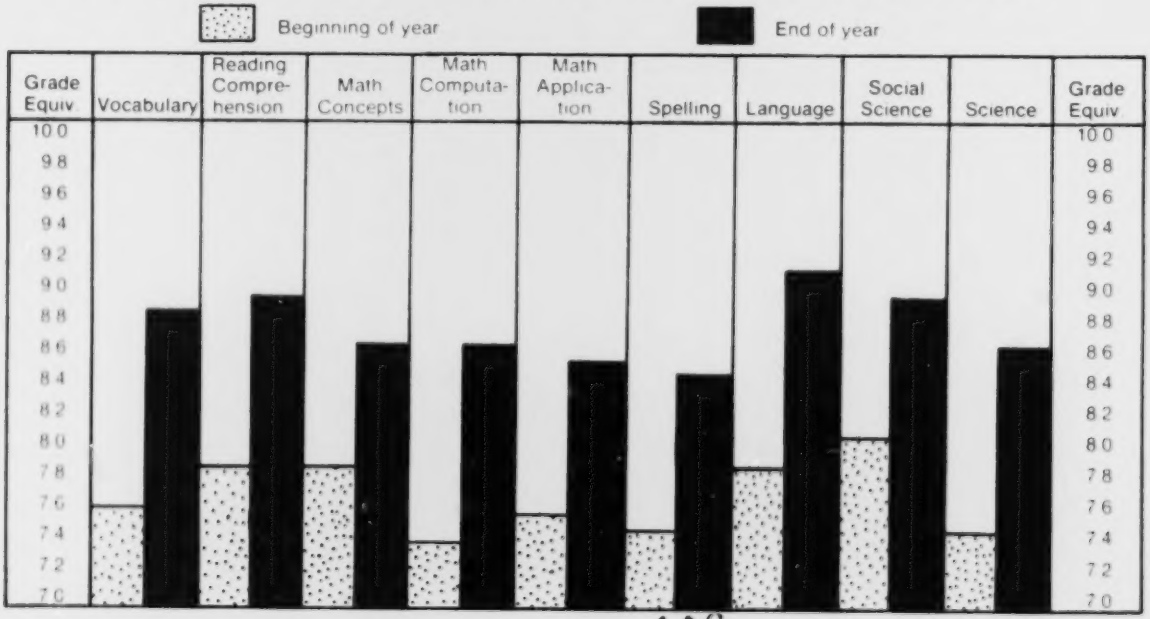
Figure 15—National Achievement Test—District Record

Grade One School Year 1990-91

SUB TEST	Pre Test Grade Equivalent	Post Test Grade Equivalent	Gain	Expectancy
Vocabulary	1 7	2 6	9	2 8 (2 5)
Reading—Part A	1 3	2 3	1 0	2 1 (2 4)
Reading—Part B	1 2	2 4	1 2	2 0 (2 5)
Reading Comprehension	1 3	2 4	1 1	2 1 (2 4)
Work Study Skills	1 8	2 7	9	3 0 (2 6)
Math Concepts	1 7	3 1	1 4	2 8 (2 8)
Math Computation	1 2	2 8	1 6	2 0 (2 7)
Listening Comprehension	2 1	3 2	1 1	3 5 (2 8)
AREA TOTALS				
Total Reading	1 5	2 6	1 1	2 5 (2 5)
Total Mathematics	1 5	2 9	1 4	2 5 (2 7)
Total Auditory	1 9	2 8	9	3 1 (2 6)
BATTERY TOTAL				
Complete Battery	1 2	2 6	1 4	2 0 (3 3)

Figure 16—Grade Equivalent Analysis

This analysis compares class performance at the end of the year with performance at the beginning of the year



teacher's class (rather than all Grade One classes), it would show that in all instances the teacher met at least one of the two established expectancies. The principal reviews this information with the teacher, discussing why this one area was not up to expectations, extenuating circumstances that may have been involved, and what might be done to improve performance during the coming year. In this particular situation, for example, the class contained an unusually large number of students with learning difficulties, and the conclusion was highly complimentary to the teacher for results achieved under difficult circumstances.

Analysis of test scores should identify areas where additional teaching emphasis is needed and where programs require modification. They should provide the board with the assurance that the district is performing at a satisfactory level and, hopefully, one that is improving. The most direct benefits of the information system will go to teachers and managers, because it will indicate where specific improvements can be made.

Personnel information

Supervision and evaluation are essential to the professional development of the staff and to the improvement of instruction. Board members should expect the management team to use information on teacher performance in at least five basic areas (and to make appropriate reports to the board):

- Classroom performance of each teacher;
- Over-all professional performance of each teacher;
- The development and attainment of personal objectives determined jointly by teacher and principal;
- Student and parent feedback;
- Student learning, growth, and development.

An over-all assessment of teacher performance can be based on such information. The system should be devel-

oped with the participation of the teachers to the fullest extent possible.

Classroom performance should be assessed in a number of specific areas of competence, which each district will need to develop for itself but which generally includes such items as planning and preparation, applying evaluation and assessment procedures, classroom control, the use of instructional materials, and the individualizing of instruction. The principal of a building (or instructional supervisor or team leader) can focus on these competencies in recording observations and reaching conclusions about the teacher's performance and development. Such a check list provides a common reference point for the teacher, principal, team leader, and anyone else involved in the appraisal process. Inadequacies can be identified and categorized before making plans for improvement. Follow-up observations and conferences will show the extent to which planned improvements have succeeded.

Over-all performance refers to those teacher responsibilities not readily observable in the classroom. They include: implementation of district programs and policies; sharing of ideas; volunteering assistance and support to other staff members, and maintaining effective contact with the student's home. Depending on the appraisal system and organization, the building principal, team leader, or others can gather observations and findings on a regular basis. Such performance information is particularly helpful to the board when dismissal is being considered, and is obviously a vital element in any system that is fair to teachers.

The board should also see that management provides the staff with an opportunity for self-evaluation, using a similar set of criteria to those used by supervisors. This enhances the dialogue between teacher and supervisor.

Personal objectives are vital to the total process of

staff performance appraisal, and to the information that the board needs. Based upon the observations and information generated during the appraisal process each year, every staff member (in conjunction with his or her immediate supervisor) should develop objectives designed to correct deficiencies or simply to make good performance even better.

Feedback from parents and students and student learning—the final two elements in teacher appraisal—were discussed earlier in this chapter.

Financial and budgeting information

No school district information system would be complete without financial reports for both future planning and ongoing control. This is usually the easiest information to measure.

The school board's role is to monitor the staffs effectiveness at living within available resources. Financial information that can be used for future planning is even more important. It is important to remember that financial plans often change radically because so many factors are unpredictable. (Who knows what the state legislature or U.S. Congress is going to do? What will inflation rates be? Will the voters approve a tax increase? What will the unions want?)

It will be necessary to make certain educated assumptions in making long-range financial projections. Based on these assumptions, the school board each year should receive a five-year projection of revenues and expenses. *Figure 17* is an example of the projections in one school district. It shows that although the balance for 1991-92 is in the black, some rather bleak years lie ahead unless additional revenues are found.

Board members also should expect a monthly statement showing the district's current cash position by funds. They should receive at least every other month a comparison of expenditures with major budget items.

Quarterly, the board should see a report on tax collections and state and federal aid receipts. These should be compared with the previous year, as well as with the current expenditure budget.

For long-range financial planning, the board should have a five-year prediction of the finances necessary to fund the existing program, adjusted for changes in enrollment.

A strong management information system must be integrated into the daily operation of the district. In developing an information system and establishing accountability, resistance may develop from the management team, teachers, and others who see it as a disciplinary weapon or as a subtle reminder of past failures. Even if these views are faulty, they are nonetheless real. Boards should be prepared to move slowly and carefully in dealing with them. However, boards that want to make intelligent and informed decisions in controlling the operation of schools must allocate the necessary staff time to build an effective management information system.

Figure 17—Five-year Financial Projection

Assumes cost increases of 6 percent per year

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Free Cash Balance (Deficit)-July 1	$ 297,000	$ 108,000	$(145,000)	$(468,000)	$(895,000)
New taxes for new year	1,722,686	1,794,000	1,869,000	1,918,200	1,987,000
State assistance	170,000	175,000	180,000	185,000	190,000
Other income	345,000	350,000	355,000	360,000	365,000
Total estimated cash	2,534,686	2,427,000	2,259,000	1,995,200	1,647,000
Estimated expenditures	2,426,400	2,572,000	2,727,000	2,890,800	3,064,500
Estimated ending balance (deficit) June 30	108,286	(145,200)	(468,000)	(895,600)	(1,417,500)

9/Setting performance appraisal in motion

Many school districts have written policies for evaluating performance; few actually put them into practice. Yet, appraisal is the final and most important step in the *performance* side of the management process (and the link with the *people* side). No district can be managed adequately until it appraises performance, both institutionally (for the district and for each school and classroom) and individually (for each employee).

Evaluating district performance

Evaluation should be a positive and constructive experience for both the board and staff, and it should enable the board to make sure the district is not contributing to declining academic performance.

There is nothing particularly difficult about measuring educational performance from a technical point of view. Granted, like a lot of things that people try to measure, one can get only an indication from numbers and not a precise calculation that eliminates the need for judgment. What is difficult in school districts is the human relations involved and the absence of a tradition of accepting responsibility for performance.

Staff concerns

Before addressing the evaluation process it makes sense to discuss human relations. Boards should recognize some of the more common reasons why educators are likely to be uneasy about evaluation, administrators as much as teachers.

One problem is that the board may already be over-involved in administrative matters, and the efforts of the

superintendent may be directed to keeping them out rather than drawing them in. Administrators are well aware of the relatively high turnover on school boards and the risk that board members may not understand performance information. The possibility that evaluation can indicate poor performance will not escape notice.

No one is more aware than educators that the skills and techniques for evaluating performance are not very well developed in education. Most educators probably chose the field because they were attracted to the personal relationships required of teachers and administrators, rather than because they were inclined to be analytical. Therefore, their basic interests and orientation tend to be toward human relations rather than planning and analysis.

Also, it is only fair to acknowledge that education is inherently difficult to measure—certainly more difficult than many aspects of business or agriculture.

Why evaluate performance?

The pace of change in education during the past ten years has been so fundamental and dramatic that traditional techniques of administering school districts have been rendered obsolete almost overnight. Events that industry went through over a span of several decades—muckrakers, the depression, unions, and consumerism—have descended on the schools over a period of only five or ten years. Consider, for example:

- Rising public concern over educational performance.
- Teacher militancy and negotiations.
- Declining enrollments.
- Financial constraints.
- Rights of students, minorities, women, the handicapped, and the aged.

- Intrusion of the federal government.

Under these pressures, the need to measure educational performance has grown suddenly. School districts were once administered in a collegial fashion where teachers took responsibility for their own performance and administrators did those things that couldn't be done in the classroom. Today it is essential that school districts become managed institutions in which boards can be assured that performance is being monitored and action taken wherever appropriate. Naturally, since the need for effective management is relatively recent, training and skills are not readily available. The board should be especially alert to the need to provide administrators with access to the tools of professional management and training in the skills required to use them.

Figure 18 outlines some typical problems in school districts today and the relevance of evaluation to them. Examination of these problems should suggest that evaluation can:

- Enable the board to effectively represent the public in monitoring district performance, and give board members confidence in their staffing and compensation decisions.
- Generate public confidence in the district and therefore a willingness to fund it.
- Produce educational performance, especially as measured by student learning and consumer satisfaction.
- Create orientation to performance on the part of board, administrators, and teachers.
- Make board members less likely to interfere with administrative responsibilities.

Figure 18—Problems and Purposes of Evaluation

TYPICAL PROBLEMS	PURPOSES OF EVALUATION
PUBLIC	
• Concerned about educational performance, publicity on declining test scores • Required to approve tax rate increases due to inflation • Often aware of declining enrollments and teacher surplus	• Give public confidence in educational performance of district, basis for residential attractiveness, property values, financial support
BOARD	
• Aware of parental concern over educational performance • More aggressive in their own responsibilities • Sometimes frustrated in setting administrative salaries • May lack confidence in representing district performance to public	• Provide board with evidence of district performance • A basis for representation to the public, constructive compensation decisions, not interferring in administration
ADMINISTRATORS	
• Middle management uncertain of responsibilities and authority • Perhaps feeling disadvantaged relative to teacher negotiations • Uneasy about being responsible for performance	• Develop responsibility for performance, tools and techniques to implement • Link administrative evaluation to district performance and to compensation
STAFF	
• Lack confidence in evaluation • Believe performance is good • Understand district requires public confidence to fund itself • Desire better communication, trust and confidence • Declining in satisfaction with their profession	• Orientation to educational performance • Improvement in pride and morale • More constructive relationships staff, administration, board • Link evaluation to staff development

Principles of evaluation

The principles most useful as guidelines in developing the evaluation process include the following:

• Keep it simple, practical, and operational. Avoid approaches that are too complex and detailed, that are ex-

travagant and oriented to extensive use of computers, or that overemphasize the benefits from formal program planning systems or management by objectives. While these are relevant to school management, they are a small part of it and usually not the appropriate focus for an evaluation program.

- Keep evaluation integrated with other important elements of management in the district, including: communications, staff relations and public relations; organization and responsibilities; and performance appraisal and compensation.
- Tailor a plan for evaluation in each district and implement it gradually over a period of a few years.

Components of evaluation

Figure 19 outlines all the principal components of evaluation.

No single component of evaluation is more likely to orient board, administrators, and teachers to performance than the development of essential information. Theoretically, evaluation could be made operational without information, but it is difficult for the process really to function without information to base it on.

The second most important component is the reporting and communication process about educational performance. Reports are needed with respect to each school and each department. They should describe present situations and set forth a plan of action. A simple, short, and relatively unstructured reporting format seems best, and may be collected in a looseleaf form for subsequent review by internal committees (and ultimately by the board).

Usually these reports should be supplemented with personal presentations. Some of these may include the public. While a complete and open sharing of problems should be encouraged within the organization, a more

cautious approach will be appropriate with respect to that portion of the presentation that is made public. If the question of who should prepare such reports proves awkward, there is an implied need to rethink organization and responsibilities.

In most school districts that review the evaluation process and take steps to improve it, an expansion has resulted in reporting on progress and plans for each school and department. Typically, administrators (including department heads) need to learn some new skills and to be reassured that sharing evaluation

Figure 19—Components of Evaluation

- INFORMATION (See Figure 8 on page 86.)
- REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION
  Descriptions of present situation and plans for improvement in each school and department.
  Reviewed by internal committee; questions on possible weaknesses and opportunities to improve performance; may include board members.
  Reporting to the public, with supporting evidence.
- PLANNING, ANALYSIS AND ACTION
  Analysis of information to determine what is going on—in schools, departments, classrooms.
  Board decisions on educational standards.
  Action to improve performance where possible.
- RESPONSIBILITIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND STAFF SKILLS
  Acceptance of responsibility for performance.
  Skills and techniques developed gradually, with help.
  Well-defined plan for evaluation, jointly developed with staff.

OTHER CLOSELY RELATED ELEMENTS OF MANAGEMENT

- Board and superintendent evaluation.
- Evaluation of administrators.
- Compensation plan for administrators.
- Teacher evaluation.
- Sound organization; definition of responsibilities and relationships.

results need not be unbearably threatening. Teachers should be involved in this process, and this may encourage a more participative style of management.

Planning, analysis and action are, of course, the ultimate objectives of the evaluation process. For the most part, these techniques are not well developed in school districts and a good deal of coaching is needed. However, learning by doing is often the best way, especially if it can be combined with expert assistance and/or a tolerant school board.

Responsibilities, relationships, and staff skills—the human relations aspects—are inevitably the most difficult part of developing an evaluation process. Leadership from the board and superintendent is essential, along with help in understanding what responsibility for performance means. In this respect a well defined plan for acquiring evaluation skills is very helpful.

Finally, there are other related elements of management that need to be developed to complement efforts to improve evaluation. These include:

- Evaluation of the board and the superintendent, often usefully done as a joint exercise.
- Evaluation of administrators, best done within the context of evaluation of district performance.
- A compensation plan for administrators is essential if they are being asked to accept responsibility for the performance of other people.
- A program for teacher evaluation is a separate subject of nearly equal difficulty, one that needs to be linked into the overall district evaluation program.
- District organization and management responsibilities may have to be redefined to accommodate evaluation. Responsibility for performance can alter the duties associated with individual jobs, as well as staff relationships and patterns of organization.

Often there is a need to expand the definition of responsibility for performance at middle management levels. Frequently this can be accompanied by reductions in administrative staffing elsewhere, more than offsetting what may be slight added costs in released time and compensation for middle management personnel, especially department heads.

It is essential to distinguish clearly between *district* evaluation and *personnel* evaluation. The former has to do with the overall educational performance and financial condition of the district and its schools and departments. The latter deals with the performance of individuals. Obviously both are related, and a good evaluation plan treats them accordingly. But treating district, school, and department performance separate from individual performance is important. For one thing it depersonalizes the evaluation process in a way that makes it much more tolerable to those involved. Second, there is not a direct correlation between program performance and individual performance. Student test scores represent just one aspect of a teacher's performance. By the same token, the teacher's performance is just one factor influencing the test scores.

Many boards and superintendents have made good progress in jointly evaluating and strengthening their working relationship. Still, the area is one of considerable concern. Experience suggests two particular cautions. One is not to mistake this for the board's job of evaluating district performance. Of course, if district performance is satisfactory, the superintendent is probably doing a good job. However, it also is important to assess how well the board and superintendent work together, quite apart from the monitoring of district performance.

Similarly, administrative evaluation should build heavily on district performance information and only

secondarily on appraisals of individual traits or styles.

Getting evaluation started

A school district getting into evaluation for the first time should:

- Start from a plan.
- Implement it gradually.
- Get some help.

Where evaluation is new to a district, its impact on the staff at all levels is likely to be considerable. Success depends upon a specific commitment and a plan. The plan should be based on a careful analysis of what the district is already doing in evaluation. It should be developed with staff participation. Like the blueprint for a building, a plan can save money in the long-run and need not be expensive to develop.

An evaluation plan may take several years to implement and will always need regular modification. *Figure 20* shows some examples of implementation steps over a three year period, mainly to indicate the approximate timing and the variety of approaches that are possible. Introducing an evaluation process over a period of years allows for the gradual development of skills and attitudes essential to effectiveness. No substantial investment is required at any point.

The outside evaluator

The obstacles to strengthening evaluation are sometimes so severe that a district cannot move ahead by itself. Most school districts are too small to have a full-time staff corresponding to the corporate planning function of a business.

An outside evaluator can serve as trainer and catalyst to ensure that evaluation develops effectively, avoids extravagant approaches, and receives the attention it deserves from both staff and board. Specifically,

Figure 20—Typical Steps and Timing in Implementing Evaluation

First Year	Second Year	Third Year
SCHOOL DISTRICT A		
• Organization audit • Compensation plan • Evaluation plan Document and assess present practices Specify responsibilities and steps	• Prepare basic information Test data Consumer/staff survey • Initiate reporting and analysis by schools and departments	• Expand participation by board and public • Refine staff analytical skills, planning and action • Strengthen and streamline reporting process
SCHOOL DISTRICT B		
• Community survey	• Parent and staff surveys • Analysis of test data • Strengthen teacher evaluation	• Repeat community survey • Annual parent and staff surveys • Teacher analysis of test data
SCHOOL DISTRICT C		
• Organization audit • Evaluation plan	• Outline plans prepared by each department head and principal • Reports to board • Test data analysis and comparisons	• Expand planning process • Compensation plan

the outside evaluator can serve these functions:

- Help design simple and practical systems for gathering and reporting information.
- Help train board members, administrators, and teachers in the techniques of planning and analysis.
- Receive and tabulate survey questionnaires, guaranteeing respondent anonymity, and aid in survey design and procedures.
- Help analyze test data, audit procedures, compare

to other districts.

- Ensure that evaluation is effectively linked with staff responsibility, development, and compensation.

Regardless of whether outside help is needed, evaluation should become an integral part of regular management responsibilities at all levels of the organization. Experienced outside counsel can stimulate and guide development of the evaluation process, but should not supplant management's fundamental responsibility for evaluation.

Appraising staff performance

As a practical matter, the school board can reasonably appraise the performance of only one person in the school system—the superintendent. However, the board also is obligated to develop policies on performance appraisal for all employees, policies that lay the foundation for performance of the district as a whole. Encouraging school boards to understand and do something about educational performance is one of the main opportunities for improving school management.

Teachers are unaccustomed to performance appraisal, because until recently the teaching profession took responsibility for its own performance and results and for its own competence and development. Under this system, administrators were facilitators who supported the teaching process, but who did not take responsibility for teacher performance and results. This traditional organization of education has been turned upside-down in recent years, due primarily to teacher union negotiations. The gathering of performance information focuses district efforts on performance rather than personalities, and provides an objective basis for decisions at all levels of the organization. As evidenced by such fields as agriculture and business, success in quantifying information produces more accurate

decisions and better performance. This proves true even where actual measurement of performance is not possible, but has to be reached through secondary indicators or clues. It is certainly the case in education, where the end result is unclear until the end of the child's lifetime. (Even at that late date, who can measure the success of a person's life or the impact of education upon it?) Such imponderables notwithstanding, good educational managers are able to grasp the performance of their schools or departments, and they often have considerable information that is relevant to performance--whether such indicators are test results; student, teacher, and parent opinions; attendance or expulsion rates, or the judgments of administrators who are close to the classroom.

The human side of performance appraisal in education is a difficult and delicate issue which can undermine the value of any information if not well-handled. Those being judged must be assured that the information collected will be interpreted fairly. The specification of standards in advance of actual appraisal is required. Procedures that produce competition and personal distress damage both morale and performance, producing virtually no beneficial effects.

Insistence on performance appraisal, even a certain toughness in demanding it, is the board's job. The purpose of any organization is not merely to serve the needs of its employees. School consumers—students, parents, and taxpayers—elect board members to monitor performance and ensure that it is at least satisfactory. Yet, if performance appraisal is to work in practice, it also must be fair and acceptable to the staff.

Ingredients of appraisal

The requirements for effective performance appraisal and some approaches to developing the process follow:

1) Organizing performance appraisal is the most essential step toward doing it. The information gathered will be of little value unless it is part of a plan.

• Appraisal is primarily judgmental and only secondarily subject to quantitative analysis. Thus, the two most important steps are (1) to put into place people whose competence and legitimacy in judging performance is respected throughout the organization, and (2) to arrange the process so that their observations can be based on solid evidence and an adequate understanding of the underlying situation.

• Appraisal by a single individual using one source of information (such as a checklist) should be avoided in favor of using a number of evaluators and different sources of information. Most educators understand that differing styles and philosophies can produce irresolvable differences of opinion. Consequently, any appraisal system that depends exclusively on a single appraiser using one source of information is likely to prove intolerable to those being appraised. Many attempts at performance appraisal have failed by not taking this principle into account.

• The appraisal process must focus on performance (results), rather than on personal traits and characteristics. For one thing, emphasis on personal traits and characteristics discourages creativity and frequently limits an individual's ability to achieve desired results. Furthermore, traits and characteristics do not correlate well with performance. Some rather unconventional people produce outstanding results. Focusing on personal traits also makes appraisal threatening to the staff. Where institutional performance is emphasized (classroom, district, etc.), even the most sensitive employee can see the inherent objectivity and should view the results with dispassion.

• The process should be thoroughly documented with time schedules, responsibilities, and steps to be taken spelled out in detail. Everyone needs to know what is going to happen and when.

2) A sound system of information gathering is needed for performance appraisal.

• Personal observations have a place in any judgmental process, but they should be viewed in a broad context. Observations should come from a number of individuals so that the information is representative. A principal's evaluation by the superintendent should not be unduly influenced by the most recent telephone call from a parent.

• Appropriate safeguards should be developed in each district to ensure that "personal observation" information is held strictly confidential.

• Analytical skills are required for the interpretation of data. Persons skilled in data analysis are not found in most school districts. However, a staff member can be assigned (and compensated for) the responsibility for developing such skills. In the meantime, assistance is available from management firms, testing companies, and universities.

3) Performance appraisal must start with a thorough description of the current situation in each classroom, department, school, or district.

• Each manager in the system should be asked to assess current educational performance and to recommend improvements. This description should be concise, factual, and well-organized.

• The management team and the board should review performance standards to decide whether they are financially feasible and in line with the needs and expectations of the community.

One district's approach

One concept of a performance appraisal process is depicted in *Figure 21.* It should be apparent from the chart that most steps in the process take place at the beginning of the school year or earlier. Three basic levels of the organization are involved: the board, the top management group, and individual managers (principals and department heads). Individual managers need to be informed about the categories for performance monitoring established for the district. In some cases, standards are carried over from year to year. For example, a level below which no child is expected to score on reading tests may already have been established in an earlier year.

The process moves to a description of the current situation and a setting of targets. The description should be initiated by individual managers and reviewed and modified as it moves up through the top management group to the board. The description should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of each department or school in terms of student skills, program quality, consumer satisfaction, and the competence and attitudes of the staff. For example, a school or department may have too few courses or they may be too specialized or too general. Some programs may be viewed as strong and others as weak. The staff may be considered superior or, perhaps, may have a few weak members. Even though this description has a subjective quality, it is meant to be factual and it lends itself to confirmation through multiple views. In particular, the top management group must contain enough people to get into each of the schools and/or departments, and to confirm or disagree with the description developed by the individual managers. Establishing an understanding of the current situation is perhaps the single most important requirement of the planning process, yet the

Figure 21—Model for Educational Performance Appraisal

BASIC PROCESS, STEPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	Beginning of Year or Earlier				End of Year	
	ESTABLISH CRITERIA		DESCRIBE SITUATION, SET TARGETS		APPRAISE PERFORMANCE	
	CATEGORIES	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	TARGETS	INFORMATION	JUDGMENT
SCHOOL BOARD	Review and modify or approve	Review and modify or approve	Review	Review and modify or approve	Review highlights of information	Review results
TOP MANAGEMENT GROUP	Establish institutional performance categories	Set district standards in some or all categories	Review. Consolidate. Present to Board	Review. Consolidate. Present to Board	Gather information (systematic, explicit)	Appraise performance. Consolidate for district
INDIVIDUAL MANAGERS (schools, departments)	Participate	Participate	Describe and analyze present situation	Set targets for change 1, 3, 5 years	Interpret and analyze information	Describe and analyze performance

one most commonly overlooked.

At this phase of the planning and performance appraisal process, each manager sets forth his targets for the next one to five years. These targets should be reviewed by the top management group and approved by the board. Approval of the targets is important, but changes should be made where appropriate. For example, some of the targets may not be up to district expectations, they may not fit over-all district plans, or there may not be resources to do everything that the first level of management would like. Once the changes are made, however, the plans will provide a set of expectations agreed upon at all three levels and represent a suitable basis for subsequent performance appraisal. The targets should focus on the institutional performance (district, school, or department) for which the manager is responsible.

The final phase of the process takes place toward the end of the school year and involves both information and appraisal. The gathering and interpretation of information is a separate step from the appraisal itself. The information (test data, observations, surveys, and over-all conclusions) provide a basis for comparing the situation at the end of the year with what existed at the beginning of the year. Conclusions about performance or recommendations for change need not be made at this point. The information should be used simply as a basis for understanding what happened during the year.

The final step is the appraisal of performance. First, individual managers can look at their segment of the institution and appraise where it is, what it has accomplished, and where it is going. Second, top management can consolidate these appraisals for the district and modify them according to their own judgments and perspectives. Finally, the board reviews the results. The board must receive a comprehensive review of

results at least annually and acquire a thorough understanding of what is going on in the district, where it is not measuring up, and what is planned in the way of corrective action.

The complexity of the performance appraisal process should not be underestimated. It involves considerable time from the management group and requires skills that generally are not well-developed in education. Yet, appraisal makes sense as a way for the board to understand where action is needed. Board members should insist on such a process and ensure that the needed time and effort be devoted to develop it. Getting the process underway probably will require several years, of course.

Managers who accept a performance appraisal system and do well under it deserve to be compensated at higher levels than those who don't. But perhaps the greatest incentive for managers is the realization that without a performance appraisal system, the district is essentially unmanaged. If there is no basis for judging management's contribution—which a performance appraisal system can do—the cost of management will come under increasing public criticism.

School employees represent a great reservoir of energy and potential that is never fully tapped. For management to release this energy is of inestimable value to education. It doesn't take elaborate monetary incentives to bring out the best in people, but personal recognition of their good work is essential. The effective board member will make a point of reinforcing the praise that management directs at school district employees for their good performance. The custodian who has done an excellent job of cleaning the school will beam with pride when a board member gives him a personal pat on the back. The same can be said for any other employee, including the superintendent.

10/The selection and development of teachers

A teacher is a manager in the classroom and must take part of the responsibility for her or his own performance—union membership notwithstanding. Boards that recognize this and involve teachers in the management process have the best chance to improve learning results.

An ineffective teacher diminishes the district's educational performance—but represents a problem that is difficult to rectify. State tenure laws often make it difficult to remove inadequate teachers. So do union protests. All this is further complicated when performance standards are purely comparative or judgmental and do not provide sufficient legal cause to support a dismissal.

Getting good teachers

What is the board's role in staff selection? Generally, the board directly handles the staffing of only one position—the superintendency. However, the board is legally responsible for the staffing of all positions. In a proper board-superintendent relationship, the board uses personnel policies to delegate to the superintendent authority for staffing and holds him responsible for the results.

A board must insist that the management team seek out the best possible potential staff members. If the management team reports that, "although many candidates apply for each job in this district, none are actively recruited," the board should be concerned. The applicants may be those no one else wants as first choice candidates. In addition, the administrators'

standards become clouded if they are comparing second and third choice candidates, rather than seeking out the best ones available.

The actual selection of teachers is a task of the management team, and the board's role is to hold the superintendent accountable for results. The management team will make mistakes occasionally in the persons it recommends for employment. That's to be expected. Failure to correct errors in selection is unacceptable, however. Management must develop the poor performer to meet minimum standards or commence dismissal procedures.

Also, the board should be sensitive to the teacher turnover rate and its possible causes. For instance, if a large percentage of the teachers is being released—or none at all—the board should question the performance standards in the one case and the usefulness of the appraisal system in the other.

The school board must take formal action before a teacher is legally employed. However, there will be times between board meetings when it is necessary for the superintendent to employ teachers pending board approval. Unless the board is sincerely convinced that some inappropriate actions have been taken, it should not refuse to accept the superintendent's hiring recommendations. It should, however, feel free to question and express concerns it may have about an appointee, and it should expect answers. The questions should attempt to determine whether an adequate procedure was allowed in recruiting, interviewing, and evaluating the applicants.

Throughout the year, the superintendent should provide the board with information regarding the district's professional staff. District staffing needs in terms of specific requirements by grade and/or subject area and general goals for upgrading the staff are things the

board should know. At least once a year, the board should receive a report describing the teacher turnover rate. The report should be organized by school and by reasons for leaving (such as maternity, moving out of the area, or retirement).

Experience nationally indicates that teachers are a mobile group. A good question for the board member to ask of the administrative staff is: "Do you have a debriefing session with all employees, classified and certified, to determine the exact reasons for their leaving and get their views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the district?" The candid suggestions of departing employees can be beneficial, although some responses may be purely cynical.

What should board members look for in candidates recommended by the management team? They should know that teachers with liberal arts backgrounds add diversity to a staff, and those from outside the district give the staff a balance in terms of experience and outlook on teaching. Regularly employing teachers from the same institution or state tends to breed provincialism into the staffs outlook on the educational process. It also is well to be wary of the experienced teacher with a history of frequent job changes. In some cases the reasons are perfectly legitimate, but in others there may be deficiencies in performance that account for the frequency of their moves.

Boards should insist that the management team maintain close contact with selected college placement officers, even when the district does not have vacancies. College placement officers need to know the type of teachers a district looks for, the community, and the school program.

Of growing interest to boards and employees alike are declining enrollments and staff reductions. The main goals of teacher unions include job protection clauses

that make seniority the sole criterion in laying off staff. Such clauses ignore an employee's qualifications and performance and obviously should be avoided.

Appraising teacher performance

The primary objective in appraising teacher performance is to provide a basis for professional growth. The second objective is to ensure that the staff is meeting district standards. This in turn provides a basis for dismissing teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory and for making staff reductions on the basis of performance rather than seniority. To avoid having the second objective get in the way of the primary objective, some districts have two separate appraisal systems.

The performance appraisal process for teachers should be specified in an open, explicit way so they can understand it and challenge it if they so desire. Teacher performance appraisal should involve multiple views as a hedge against the differences in style and philosophy among professional educators. The appraisal should focus sharply on the educational performance of the children rather than on the personal traits of the teachers. It should take advantage of the best teaching talent in each district, especially those teachers skilled at helping their colleagues improve. Appraisal should be supported by information relevant to teaching performance (as suggested in Chapter 8). However, test data, student and parent opinions, etc., should be viewed as only part of the total appraisal. The process requires the application of subjective judgment in determining what the information means. Nevertheless, appraisal must rely heavily on objective information if it is to be tolerable to the teachers and as fair as possible.

Performance appraisal systems that depend on a single observer often prove unworkable in practice. (Would a single theater critic or one-person art jury

seem fair to an actor or artist?) Whether a group of evaluators or an individual is used, however, the criteria for their appointment is important. They must be:

- Thoroughly competent professionals in the teaching field;
- Able to develop a counseling relationship with the teachers they are appraising;
- Respected by the teachers for their professional competence and skill in helping others develop.

Performance review groups

Successful districts sometimes have principals carry the responsibility for performance appraisal. Other districts use a group approach. Where a group is used, it should include balanced representation from district, school, and team levels. For example, a team leader, the school principal, and a district administrator should be involved in the appraisal of each teacher. The membership of such a team would be different for each of the teaching teams in the district, with the principal of each school providing continuity across all teams within a school, and one district administrator providing continuity across the district. The district administrator would also fullfill a supportive role for the group in two respects:

- Record findings, conclusions, and recommendations and maintain records of the appraisal process.
- Ensure that district goals are met.
- Analyze the district's experience with appraisal, identifying development needs, suggesting action programs, and assessing whether the programs have in fact improved teacher effectiveness.

The process for evaluating teachers should be spelled

out in some detail to be understood and accepted by teachers. For instance, the number and timing of reviews and the standards for classroom performance should be specified. While steps and procedures in the evaluation process should be defined, the structure of the appraisal itself should be left relatively flexible. *Figure 22* outlines such a format that is relatively simple and is easy to work with. Emphasis should be on the process rather than on the form.

The major role of the school board in teacher performance appraisal is to adopt a firm policy stating that it should be done and done effectively. The board also should be prepared to invest in the on-going training of its teachers based on individualized appraisals. And the board must stand behind its management team when it comes to the tough part—terminating teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory.

Figure 22—Suggested Record of Classroom Observation

1) DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

The observer should make a written record of factual findings in the following categories:

- Teacher behavior
- Classroom situation, learning environment
- Appropriateness of teaching activity to district curriculum
- Extent of individualization
- Evidence of student learning
- Information resulting from analysis of test data and from feedback opinions of students and parents
- Teacher contribution to team and school

2) CONCLUSIONS

Each observer and the teacher (self-evaluation) should prepare conclusions about teacher performance, as well as development needs and opportunities. The Performance Review Group should meet and prepare composite conclusions.

3) RECOMMENDATIONS

Action steps recommended by the observer(s) and the Performance Review Group.

Staff development

Teachers are among the most vocal critics of staff development practices of school districts. Part of the problem is that performance appraisal is not always conducted in a fair and comprehensive manner or is not done at all. Without appraisal, no adequate basis exists for identifying and meeting the professional development needs of individual teachers.

Teachers require outside support, guidance, and observation in the course of appraising their own performance and identifying ways to improve. Too many districts have no way to accomplish this. Therefore, strengthening performance appraisal is the first step in meeting staff development needs.

Moreover, teachers are as different in their training needs as are students. Any staff development program that is to be effective must recognize individual character and the need for different development techniques. College courses, in spite of the fact that they typically lead to salary increases, are only of modest value to teachers, especially to those who have actually begun teaching. Typical in-service training programs are at best relevant to the needs of only a few teachers, and usually do not meet critical needs. Therefore, the two programs on which most districts focus their staff development activities—paying higher salaries for additional college credits and providing in-service days—are at best of limited value or simply irrelevant. The crucial question for a school board is: "Do current staff development programs really improve student learning?"

In any district, a few teachers will experience difficulties in achieving expected performance. They urgently require assistance in identifying their problems and correcting them. The need for action is pressing, and it is for these teachers that better staff development is most urgent. Some of these teachers are relatively new

to the profession, others are not.

Unfortunately for the public, school boards and their administrators too often take the easy way out in compensating employees. They adopt plans that provide guaranteed salaries and across-the-board annual increases with total disregard for performance. Teacher salaries and raises, for example, generally are based on college training and length of service rather than on student learning and attitudes, parent satisfaction, etc. Administrators often get paid on the same basis as teachers, and receive across-the-board increases that raise everyone's salary by a given percentage. In either case, there is little correlation of compensation to contribution. Thus, salaries have little or no positive impact on educational performance. But they should.

There is no evidence that performance necessarily improves with additional college degrees and credits or with length of service, at least beyond the first few years. Some outstanding teachers and educational managers have few credits, degrees, or years of service; there also are outstanding ones who have many. And there are poor ones at both ends of the scale. Although the standard salary schedule may be seen by the union to be advantageous in treating everyone alike and keeping members from being held accountable, it does not serve the professional interests of educators. Where compensation is not related to performance, the best performers receive no recognition for their contributions to the education of children.This can discourage the best performers from staying in the field.

Principles of compensation

A school district's compensation policies should treat all employees fairly. No responsible school board consciously exploits its employees. It is essential to the morale of any organization that compensation levels be demonstrably fair and equitable. Fairness and equity

hinge on two key factors: (1) what others are paid in similar positions in comparable organizations, and (2) the relative difficulty of jobs within an organization. These internal and external comparisons provide a sound basis for compensation. The resulting salary levels are not, of course, automatic. For each district, salary levels should be differentiated internally and compared to prevailing external levels and patterns. These basics of compensation planning apply to all school districts, and should be adequately covered in any compensation plan that the board is asked to approve.

A compensation plan should be designed to attract and retain the talent needed to carry out the district's activities. Salary incentives are one way to attract better talent, especially where more important positions are differentiated from less important ones. Also, the district's compensation plan should provide an incentive for improving performance.

The compensation plan should help the board to control costs, ensuring that the plan is fair not only to the staff but to the taxpayers as well. Above all, compensation should reflect reward for good performance at all levels—management, teachers, and service personnel.

Individualized instruction is probably more important in the development of teachers than it seems to be for students. The performance appraisal process described earlier becomes the diagnostic step toward individualized staff development. Equally important, of course, is the knowledge of techniques that are useful, and where and how they are most helpful. The following techniques have proved successful in different situations:

1) Creating opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers at work, both inside and outside the district. Teachers often say they learn best from observing other teachers. Boards ought to provide more oppor-

tunities for competent teachers to demonstrate their methods for other teachers;

2) Providing individual counseling sessions conducted by other teachers;

3) Organizing teaching teams so that the less skillful teacher can get coaching and counseling from other teachers, as well as from the principal;

4) Organizing small, specialized courses taught by outstanding teachers from the district or elsewhere;

5) Sending teachers to seminars outside the district;

6) Sending teachers to take college courses on a selective basis, tailored to individual needs and based on performance appraisal.

In the case of seminars and courses, districts can develop a file on available courses and record experiences and practical benefits derived from attending them. Where expenditures are required, the district should have an appropriate process for authorizing and controlling them. Policies will be needed, too, for the allocation of development resources to meet acute problems—especially where the solution is critical to district performance. Of course, it would be wrong to deny growth opportunities to teachers whose performance is already more than satisfactory, but the need for doing so is obviously less pressing.

The selection, appraisal, and development of teachers represent some of the most important functions of management in education. Developing effective procedures is one of the most valuable investments a board can make.

11 /Paying for performance

The largest item in the school budget is employee salaries—usually 70 to 85 percent of total operating expenditures. That's an impressive figure, but even more significant is how the salary budget is used. Compensation can have a positive effect on employee morale, satisfaction, and productivity. Or it can be a source of considerable dissatisfaction and loss of morale. In either case, compensation is an important management tool. In education, no less than in any other field, people ought to be paid according to the difficulty of their work and their contributions to the over-all purpose of the organization—educating children. Performance appraisal and commensurate compensation serve the public interest by ensuring that compensation is not awarded unless it is deserved.

Arriving at management salaries

Many school board members are uncomfortable with their task of setting administrator salaries. They recognize the risk of over-paying administrators as a response to rising teacher salaries and the unavoidable self-interest in administrative recommendations. They are sensitive to their own exposure to public criticism. They are aware of the relatively high salaries that many administrators receive, exceeding those of most citizens and even most board members. Underlying the concern with administrator compensation may be the frustration of trying to understand what educational performance really is.

Superintendents generally understand the board's concern, but are rightly interested in the morale and

motivation of the district's management team. They recognize that inadequate salaries diminish the ability of a district to attract an adequate supply of management talent. In school districts that are pressing greater management responsibilities on their administrators, compensation plays an essential role in attracting better managers and motivating them.

Most managers in education find, however, that their compensation is established by a process that is never fully revealed. (And that process often involves a good deal of board-superintendent conflict.) Pay for senior teachers may be only slightly below the manager's, and the teacher union's apparent ability to obtain increases on demand is conspicuously strong. Because mobility to other fields of management is limited, districts moving aggressively to strengthen management may be the most attractive employers for superintendents and other education managers. However, there is growing demand for management bargaining units, and unless school boards offer to their management teams an attractive compensation plan, more of this can be expected.

Teacher salaries add to the problem of management compensation, both by narrowing the differential with administrators, and by failing to reflect a logical or rational basis. Moreover, the traditional basis for paying managers in education—by levering their salaries up from those of teachers—seems completely inappropriate in an age of negotiations, and has been abandoned by most districts in principle, if not altogether in practice.

Fortunately, compensation is one area of management where techniques developed in other fields can be readily applied in education. Districts that are moving toward compensation based on performance find that the concept works well both in motivating the manage-

ment team and in satisfying the board. An example of such a plan is shown in *Figure 23*. Developing and adopting a formal management compensation plan along these lines has several distinctive features and advantages for the district:

1) It emphasizes responsibility for performance, which enhances educational quality, motivates the management team, and provides for accountability to the board and public. Thus, compensation is a positive factor in achieving the district's purposes and objectives.

2) It provides performance incentives for the management team, although recognizing the risk this involves for the members, the sharp break with tradition, and the increased demands for responsibility and performance.

3) The categories are based on thorough analysis of their relative importance to district educational performance. Participation by members of the management team is usually required. Analysis of key responsibilities, decisions, and relationships, along with such measurable factors as size of staff supervised, months worked, and budgets, must be taken fully into account.

4) Midpoints of the categories should be related to prevailing salaries for similar positions in other districts. The board must consciously decide whether to meet, exceed, or fall short of those levels.

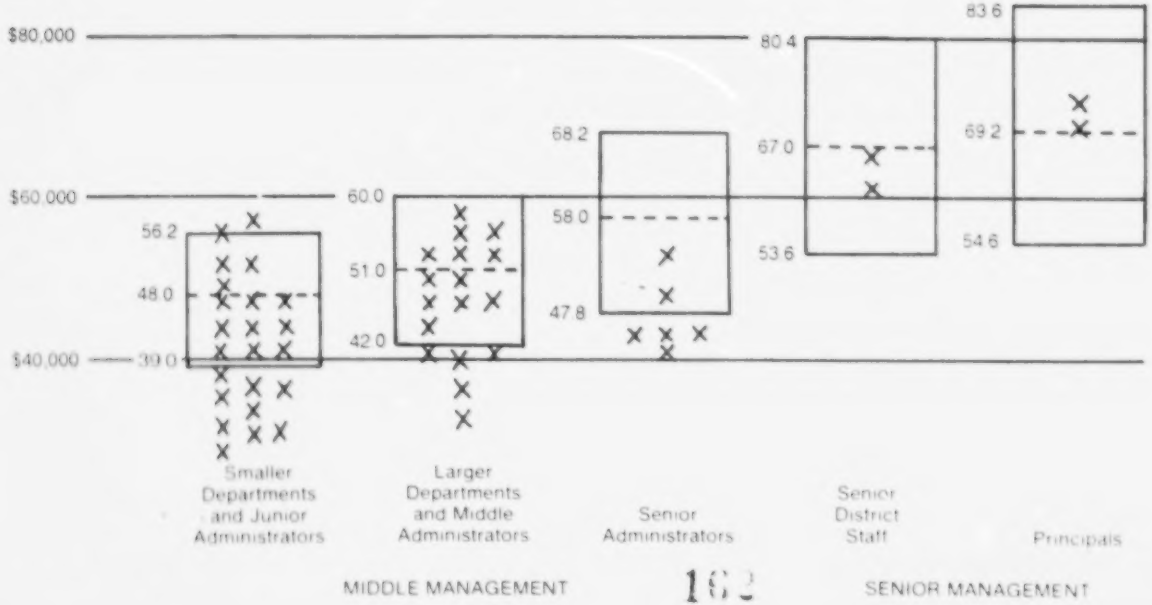
5) Ranges within each category provide substantial opportunity for recognizing performance and experience.

6) Cost controls are provided by relating midpoints to comparative salaries elsewhere, by setting first-year salaries within the lower half of the range, by the ceiling at the top of the range, and by the annual salary decisions made by the board.

7) An annual adjustment of midpoints and ranges is

Figure 23—Management Compensation Plan

x Actual current salary



required to meet changing market levels of compensation.

While every compensation plan must be tailored to the needs and circumstances of each district, the principles discussed here are widely applicable.

A compensation plan with attractive salary ranges can be misused unless the underlying performance appraisal system is sound. While compensation is important as a positive tool in motivating performance, it also is important that the appraisal system be adequate for the job, objective, and honest. The most significant assessment is the district's educational performance, rather than the personal performance of individual managers. The management team is held responsible for this educational performance, and it's on this basis that managers should be judged. The distinction is important, because management appraisal plans too often emphasize personal traits or personal objectives rather than district, school, and classroom accomplishments.

School districts often use informal performance appraisal systems that work quite well, and superintendents often are as tough as any industrial manager in expecting good performance from their people. What rarely exists, however, are formal systems of appraisal that can withstand scrutiny by staff as well as board, which are visibly fair and equitable as well as reasonably accurate, and which provide a basis for board responsibility and public scrutiny.

Teacher compensation

Dealing fully with the compensation patterns of so large and important a group as teachers is outside the scope of this book. But because many board members read articles about merit pay and become infatuated with its apparent advantages, it seems important to review the subject with two purposes in mind: First, to

provide an understanding of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of current teacher compensation plans; and second, to present the challenges and advantages of changing teacher compensation methods.

Teacher compensation today follows a single, almost universal, pattern. This is a lock-step salary schedule of from eight to twenty levels of predetermined increments. Salaries are differentiated on the basis of two factors—experience (expressed in years of service within a district) and additional college credits or degrees earned beyond the bachelor's degree. Under this system all teachers with the same credits and years of service earn the same salary.

A variation of the lock-step salary schedule is the index system. It incorporates the same two factors—experience and credits or degrees—but expresses salary increases as a percentage of a starting salary, rather than in terms of absolute dollars. In such a plan, the beginning salary is all important. For example, it might provide for a starting teacher with a bachelor's degree to earn $20,000, and for a teacher with 20 years of experience and a master's degree to earn 2.5 times as much, or $50,000. In addition to the problems associated with the standard salary schedule, the index system has this drawback: a $200 increase at the base is worth $200 times 2.5, or $500, at the top of the schedule. A district may be unable to raise its beginning salary because of the impact on its top salaries.

It can be reasonably argued that these traditional approaches to teacher compensation have some advantages. They recognize that the basic satisfactions and motivations of teachers may not be financial. And they remove salaries as a competitive or devisive factor among the teaching staff. However, there are serious disadvantages, too. Many teachers find the traditional plans quite frustrating. Unlike almost any other profes-

sion, teaching affords no opportunity for advancement, promotion, or reward based on performance, competence, dedication, or effort. Although a teacher certainly develops rapidly during the first few years of practical experience, most educators agree that beyond a period of three to five years performance is not determined mainly by years of service, but rather by skill and dedication. Therefore, to pay teachers with 15 and 20 years experience considerably higher salaries than are paid to those with three to five years experience—and to disregard their performance—seems fundamentally illogical and unfair to the teachers themselves as well as students, parents, and community.

Even worse is the use of course credits as a basis for increased compensation. Many teachers agree that beyond the basic training received in college, little if any correlation can be drawn between better teaching and more credits. In fact, some teachers are quick to point out that other professional activities would be far more beneficial. An obvious exception, of course, is the high school teacher who must keep up with changes in subject matter (science, for example).

Even in districts with traditional teacher salary schedules, boards can take the initiative in seeing that teacher performance appraisal is operating and that action is taken where performance is unsatisfactory. Members might ask, for example, how many teachers have been frozen at a step on the schedule because their performance was not satisfactory, and what measures the district uses to do so.

In the face of such severe criticisms of teacher compensation, board members may feel they should take action. However, they also should recognize the difficulties of doing so. Some boards have adopted incentive compensation approaches that simply are not appropriate in education. Others have made mechani-

cal and technical mistakes in their plans. Probably the biggest obstacle to merit pay is the inevitable resistance of teacher unions. For many districts this may preclude the desirability of the whole idea.

There are two requirements for performance-based compensation. First, the district must develop a plan that is satisfactory to teachers, workable in practice, and advantageous to the district. This is a challenging but by no means impossible task. Without such a plan, the district will have no basis from which to move toward a better system than it now has. Second, negotiation will be required to achieve such a system, at least in bargaining districts. In some districts it may be possible to move quickly; in others it may take a period of years, and indeed full implementation may never be achieved. However, if the district has a plan, it is possible to move gradually and intentionally toward it.

Many districts that use merit pay find that it works extremely well in practice. Its primary benefits are greater teaching/learning effectiveness and better student/parent acceptance of the school program. Paying more to better performers retains the best people and encourages the others to seek careers elsewhere. In most professional organizations, higher compensation for better performers results in improved morale; school districts are no exception.

Service personnel

The principles of compensation outlined here apply not only to the management and teaching staffs, but also to custodial, food service, maintenance, and secretarial personnel. The basic principles include comparisons with salaries in other districts and equitable, consistent internal salary evaluation. The compensation plans for service personnel should be less complicated than those for teachers and managers, however.

12/Public and employee relations—some management challenges

Regardless of whether the school board and administration give a second thought to effective management, there are two subjects that regularly haunt them—public relations and collective bargaining. Any school board is well-advised to maintain effective programs for communicating with the public and dealing with employees. These are doubly important for boards that want to maintain sound management systems.

The health of a school district has always depended heavily on a supportive community. However, many boards and administrators give serious attention to public opinion only in a time of crisis. Consequently, school public relations activities tend to occur in a series of peaks and valleys—and so does public support for the schools.

Effective management calls for greater stability in the school-community relationship. A board that expects public support for hard decisions must maintain channels for listening to citizens and for regularly reporting to them on such matters as evaluation results and plans for improvement.

Collective bargaining, on the other hand, is a relatively new phenomenon. Some school districts find it difficult to deal with employees who insist on forming unions and demand to bargain a contract. Unfortunately, some boards have entered into contracts that severely restrict the ability of management to manage the district.

The school board that wants effective management will give careful attention to both its public relations and employee relations.

What communication is

That the public needs to learn more about the schools comes as no surprise to board members who read their school board association journals or who see the public's reluctance to increase financial support for education. The public simply is demanding information before authorizing more taxes. Citizens want to understand the trends, methods, and innovations that are altering their schools. They want to know what the schools are trying to accomplish, and the extent to which they are achieving their goals.

While boards must provide more information about the schools, they also must listen to the public's response to that information. They must use this feedback to improve both school operations and future communications.

Effective communication is a complex process. It's a planned and systematic two-way process between a school board and its staff and the public. The goal of any effective public relations program is to convince all parties that "they're our schools and we're working together to make them better."

Planning school public relations is a responsibility of the management team. In addition to news releases, newsletters, and the like, it involves each staff member—secretaries, janitors, and classroom teachers—along with school board members and managers. It's a secretary who pleasantly answers the telephone and helps the caller find the right person to answer a question. It's a custodian who assists a visitor trying to find a certain office. It's coffee with a board member or superintendent and a few neighbors. It's a teacher who sends home a note telling of a student's accomplishment

in class. It's a school board member sharing the reasons for a decision with anyone who asks.

Communication can be anything that assists the public to know more about the schools and the schools to better understand the community.

On the other hand, communication is not something that will cover up bad programs or discipline problems, nor will it keep good reporters off the backs of school boards and superintendents. Its sole purpose is a clearer understanding by all of the needs, successes, and failures of the school district. Only through clear understanding of these areas can a school staff's efforts and the public's financial support be combined to improve the educational program for students.

Designing a communications program

The board of education has to give direction and financial support to its management team to develop and implement a communications program. Written policy guides management efforts, provides consistency, and avoids internal board dissent and confusion. Where communications policy is lacking, the most disruptive result often is dissension among school board members. Each board member, whether elected or appointed, has rapport and influence with some segment of the community. If individual board members make public relations decisions based upon personal viewpoints, chaos results. Inconsistency becomes the board's style of operation and people lose confidence. A well-developed policy guarantees students and the community that a communications program provides reasonable answers and is not dependent on political or personal whims.

No one policy statement is suited to all communities. As a minimum, a policy or series of policies must cover communications between board and staff, board and public, board and news media. For example, the board-staff communications policy should state clearly what

the board is committed to do and should describe the procedures for staff communications to the board, board communications to the staff, visits to schools by board members, and social interaction. An example of one policy detailing this approach appears in *Figure 24*. Similar policy statements should be developed for communications with news media and the public. Essentially, a communications policy that reflects a sincere effort to elicit community attitude's and aspirations for the schools establishes the rationale for all communications activities. The adoption of a board policy is only the foundation for developing a sound communications effort.

Whose responsibility?

Only when the board and superintendent make it clear to the staff that communications successes and failures are part of the annual evaluation of each employee will the emphasis on communicating be taken as seriously as it should.

Along with providing the impetus for a communications movement in the district, board members can contribute greatly to community understanding simply to talking to people about schools, their programs, their successes, and areas which need to be strengthened. Numerous studies indicate that people accept information about schools when it comes from board members and school employees more than they do from other sources.

School board meetings provide excellent opportunities to share the goals and the activities of the board with the public and the media. Board members and the superintendent must remember that everything said at a public meeting is for the record. To discourage board members from making rash statements, many boards now taperecord their proceedings, some videotape them; others televise them—all of which encourage par-

Figure 24 Example of Board-Staff Communications Policy

The board of education desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The line of communication shall be through the superintendent.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

All communications or reports to the board or to any board committee from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent. This procedure shall not be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the board administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the board's policy on complaints and grievances. Board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe the board's deliberations on issues of staff concern.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS TO THE STAFF

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern shall be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent shall use all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the board's concerns and actions.

VISITS TO SCHOOLS

Board members desiring to visit schools shall inform the superintendent in advance and make arrangements through the principals. Such visits shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Staff and board members share a keen interest in the schools and in education generally, and it is to be expected that when they meet at social affairs and other functions, they will discuss informally such matters as educational trends, issues, innovations, and general school district problems. However, board members have no special authority except when at a legal meeting of the board or vested with special authority by board action. Therefore, discussions by either party of personalities or personnel grievances shall be considered unethical conduct.

ticipants to consider carefully what they say.

To help the public grasp how the board operates, many districts supply a bulletin for all who attend meetings. The bulletin contains information about board members (sometimes including photographs to help

identify them) and may provide information on selection of members, the board's responsibilities, and an explanation of the board's policies regarding the time and method for the public to address the board.

Measuring community attitudes

There are three basic ways to gather information from the public: surveys and polls; informal face-to-face communication, and meetings between citizens and school officials. Surveys, discussed earlier in Chapter 8, are used more and more to gauge the public's opinion about the schools. The cost of surveys varies from a few hundred dollars to several thousand, all depending on the degree of precision desired in the results. (Keep in mind that parent volunteers can do some of the leg work to help keep costs down.)

When the communications program is functioning, everybody in a school district benefits. If people are communicating, the door is open to solve problems and improve the learning environment for students. When they're not, decisions and attitudes often are based on misinformation and personal likes and dislikes.

Board members benefit from an effective communications program because the public is getting information about the district and schools operate with fewer crises when the staff is communicating. The management team spends less time responding to crises, and parents have evidence that the school staff and the board care about their children.

Sources of information and assistance

The School Official's Guide to Effective Communications, published by the Illinois Association of School Boards (1991), provides a wealth of insights and ideas for both school-level and district-level communications. Another IASB publication, *Successful School Board Meetings* (1983), carries chapters on dealing with the

public and dealing with the news media, as well as an appendix on how to capture the public relations potential in board meetings. In addition to the basic edition applicable everywhere, special state editions of this book are available from the school boards associations in Illinois, New Jersey and Louisiana.

The Illinois Association of School Boards also makes available a number of public relations tools, including a quarterly School Public Relations Service, packaged campaigns on parent involvement and school morale, clip art, and a booklet of communications tips entitled *How to do it Better.*

School districts also can obtain information and assistance from the National School Public Relations Association and its state chapters.

The rise of unions in education

For thousands of the nation's school board members, significant change occurred in the 1970's. Teachers who formerly talked about teaching and the curriculum began talking about negotiated contracts and about who should represent them.

A generation ago teachers were underpaid and perhaps even sometimes unappreciated members of society. They were expected to give unselfishly to the young, to educate children who lived in better homes than they and who would attend better colleges. Why? So that students could prepare for positions commanding more money, power, and respect in a society where money and respect go hand in hand. Then, with some outside prodding, it dawned upon the teacher that in unity there is strength, and that to be an isolated professional in the classroom is not as rewarding as having a union press the board for better pay and working conditions.

Consequently more and more teachers began to think in terms of greater financial success and reward. They found champions in two powerful unions: the National

Education Association (NEA), once a professional organization that now talks of strikes as freely as it once talked of improved programs; and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), which consistently offers to gain for its members two of society's top prizes—money and power.

In the AFT and NEA teachers found experienced, hardhitting leaders who know how to demand more money than the teachers themselves could get from school boards and how to win contract terms so there will be a way to win more money and power the next time around. These leaders are not afraid to strike in order to win their demands, and their ultimate objective is an education policy-making role for themselves. What unions did for printers, teamsters, taxi drivers, and plumbers, they now are doing for teachers. Teacher unions know what they want.

Obviously, unions place many new pressures on school boards and administrators. To protect the public—and themselves—boards and superintendents must establish clearly defined procedures for board-management relationships and adhere faithfully to prescribed channels in the chain of command. A popular union strategy is to undercut administrators and break up the chain of command, diverting school board (and public) attention toward the union's goals and away from educational goals.

Under a formal union contract, the base of the school district chain of command is the teaching force. At the same level is the classified staff of custodians, secretaries, etc. This work force is answerable to the principal or other designated supervisor. The channels through which all employees must go in communicating with the central administration or the board are clearly outlined by policy, precedent, or contract.

The status of collective bargaining varies from state

to state. The specific laws in one's own state are important for board members to know in formulating policies on collective bargaining. The key question in determining the bargaining strategy for a school board is, "How much management control are we willing to give up?"

Impact on performance

The consequences of collective bargaining can be dramatic where school district performance is concerned. The impact on finance is the first consequence to come to mind—the union survives by gaining financial benefits for its members. But the really significant consequences can occur in such areas as:

- Public opinion that turns against unionized teachers and the schools;
- Union contracts that make it impossible for managers to control staff performance and/or educational results;
- Reductions in programs and/or staffing to finance salary settlements;
- Decline in teacher morale and productivity because communication and trust are diminished.

Labor relations introduces a whole new set of concepts and principles to supplement those more informal procedures which used to be called "communications with employees." For example:

1) A union can breed mediocrity. A negotiated contract treats all people equally and stifles individual creativity and initiative. The needs of the individual teacher are replaced by the needs of the union. This quickly becomes apparent when one has to negotiate things like agency shop (which requires teachers to pay dues whether they join the union or not) or seniority clauses (last hired, first fired). Obviously these deal with union needs rather than individual teacher needs.

Moreover, state and national teacher organizations move school districts toward educational conformity. School districts in one part of the state or nation get the same union goals and demands and tend to have contracts similar to those in other parts of the state or nation. Local self-determination is reduced and sometimes eliminated.

2) Collective bargaining requires sophistication and skill in a whole new field. It is not something that a board can undertake on the spur of the moment merely with the best interests of the district and students at heart. Ronald R. Booth, former labor relations consultant for the Illinois Association of School Boards, stated, "As I review contracts throughout the state, I am appalled at some of the things we find. If the board members or administrators who bargained those contracts had known what they were giving away, they would have thought twice. For instance, many of the contracts in this state effectively eliminate probationary periods by granting 'just cause dismissal'. This means that some districts have granted instant tenure to first-year teachers." Parties that go to a bargaining table professing the interest of the students at heart are really there under false pretenses, and the hidden agenda soon will take over. The hidden agenda for the union is more benefits, more security, more control. And, although the students may or may not suffer, their needs certainly will be reduced in priority.

School boards and administrators must become sophisticated and skilled in dealing with collective bargaining. They must recognize the basic fact that the union, not the board, is going to represent employees. Boards must recognize that when they give teachers something, the union gets the credit for it; the board doesn't.

Unfortunately, building principals are caught in the

middle. The board and its representatives negotiate the contract with the union, and principals have to implement it. The board may agree that personal leave can be given at the discretion of the principal. Consider the trauma this creates for the principal. One principal may say, "Going to your nephew's wedding is reason for personal leave." Another may say, "No one is leaving my building unless there's a death in the family."

School administrators must learn to manage with the aid of the union representative. Teachers who have problems often bypass the principal and go to the building representative.

The board's role in bargaining

How does a board member fit into the process of collective bargaining? The answer depends on whether the board bargains formally. Those that do not bargain formally have two concerns. The first is policy development. It's easy for such boards to talk about all kinds of things with their teachers—e.g., curriculum, board decisions, district goals. However, when by law or by pressure they are forced to write an agreement with a union, these boards are faced with what is called "past practices." These boards are creating two problems. First, when the union starts negotiating, it doesn't want to lose what its members already have. Secondly, any neutral involved in interpreting what is being done certainly will not grant the union less than what it had before.

Board members in districts where no contract is signed with a union should carefully examine what they are talking about and what they are granting to teachers without a contract. Policies on personnel should be scrutinized as carefully as a contract would be. A good exercise is to pretend such policies are a contract and see what would or would not be granted to the union in contract form.

Who should bargain for the board?

Opinions differ over who should bargain for the school board. But there is widespread agreement that, while taxpayers and teachers should know of the board's concerns, it is inadvisable for the entire board to sit at the bargaining table. In fact, there is general agreement that board members should not be spokesmen for the board of education. The board of directors of General Motors does not talk directly to the United Auto Workers, because they do not understand in detail the issues at hand. So, too, school board members should not do the talking for the board, because many do not fully understand the issues and their implications.

There also are problems with administrators negotiating, particularly superintendents. The superintendent cannot be both an adversary to the staff and an inspiring educational leader.

Many districts turn to a central staff officer, such as the business or personnel manager, as negotiator. But sometimes a person in that position doesn't make a good negotiator either, because he is accounting oriented, or curriculum-oriented, or simply incapable of dealing with conflict.

Often it is penny-wise and dollar-foolish not to employ an outside expert. The board should select a person knowledgeable in the process and issues, one who doesn't mind the kinds of conflict involved. If the person representing the board doesn't have the experience and background, regardless of the title or position, it's important to get that person trained.

Avoiding the union

Districts not engaged in collective bargaining may not have to. Industry on many occasions has offered incentives to employees that squelched their desire for a

union. Some school districts have been successful with such counter proposals.

To keep a union out, the board must remove the incentive for organization by meeting the workers' expectations in such areas as pay levels, progression in pay, fringe benefits, and working conditions. Because these matters change with conditions, regular improvements must be made. For example, pay levels should be increased and fringe benefits improved as they increase in the teaching field generally.

Even more important is the employees' faith in the administration and board. There must be both formal and informal communication, so that individuals are encouraged to express their feelings and interests. The administration must listen to the teachers as well as talk to them and must build a reputation for voluntarily doing what is right.

If the job of management will be tougher and the costs about the same as they would be with a union, what is the advantage of remaining unorganized? The answer is that the board and management will retain valuable flexibility in the management of the school district without the handicaps inherent in a formal contract. And the entire community—board, parents, students, and teachers—can benefit from the power of incentive under a merit compensation plan for teachers. Such plans may well be impossible to implement where the union is strong. Better management and improved productivity, of course, contribute to lower costs in terms of results achieved, and may over the long term result in lower costs compared to operation under a contract.

Success in managing a district so well that the teachers have no desire to organize depends on board-superintendent team work. The superintendent cannot do it alone. He must have the backing of board mem-

bers. The superintendent also will require help in supervision and communication with the teachers. Principals and other supervisory personnel will carry the major part of this responsibility. They will need training, counseling, and guidance. Their performance as supervisors will be of critical importance to success; it may even be necessary to employ them with this consideration in mind.

These requirements for dealing with employees in a way that removes the incentive for union organization apply to principals as well as to teachers. Because this is an area in which most districts will certainly wish to avoid unionization, it is vital that board members apply those same approaches to principals—fairness in compensation and working conditions, faith and trust between the management team and the board, teamwork and good working relationships among the management team members, and open communications.

Finally, these characteristics of good management are not limited in their value to those districts seeking to deal with teachers and/or principals individually rather than collectively. They are of value in any situation and in any kind of organization. If they had been prevalent in school districts 20 years ago, perhaps teacher unionization would not have grown so rapidly.

While good management is needed in all organizations, the existence of a union can make the consequences of poor management much more serious. Unless there is a clear understanding of district purposes, evidence of performance, and fair personnel policies, relations between the board, management team, and teachers can become so antagonistic as to significantly damage educational results.

Management provides the guidance, direction, and linkage between performance on the one hand, and people on the other, and is all the more important to

school districts under collective bargaining with teachers. But it is also more difficult.

Effective employee relations

With or without a union, satisfactory relations with employees are essential to good management. The board and management team should strive for:

- A relationship between teachers and administration that reflects respect and confidence;
- A decision-making process that involves teachers in planning and evaluating educational programs;
- Good communication between administration and teachers, including personal contact with the superintendent where feasible;
- A sound and fair basis for performance appraisal;
- Rewards proportioned to individual performance and contributions to school district goals.

Performance appraisal and compensation are fully consistent with effective employee relations. A system that is effective and fair gives employees the satisfaction of working for a well-managed organization that produces results and draws public support.

Further reading

For more insights into collective bargaining and how school boards can deal with it constructively, a recommended source is *Collective Bargaining and the School Board Member*, published by the Illinois Association of School Boards. This book was out-of-print in 1990 but was scheduled to be revised and reissued in 1992.

"Management is the process that links the board room with the class room. With effective management, the school board can direct and control the performance of its schools. Without effective management, the board and the schools function as separate and unrelated entities."

Page 205

School boards
on the job

"Many superintendents today feel they could use more support and understanding from their boards."

Page 170

13/Working with the superintendent

The relationship between the school board and the superintendent deteriorates rapidly when board members become frustrated at their inability to understand and influence educational performance. A vicious circle is set in motion when the board acts out its frustration by firing the superintendent. A short term of employment makes it impossible for a superintendent to deal effectively with serious district problems or to carry out long-range improvement programs.

Some common problems

The superintendent works in a system where amateurs make the rules and professionals are expected to follow them. His bosses are chosen by the voting public, or in some cases by the appointive hand of a local politician. The board to which he is accountable is subject to abrupt changes in personnel and philosophy, sometimes on a yearly basis. The superintendent finds it necessary to convince, cajole, mollify, educate, and inform board members on an individual and group basis—a time-consuming task, because some boards have as many as 15 members.

Probably the most common grievance expressed by superintendents is against the domineering board member who publicly humiliates the superintendent, who wants to run the show single-handedly, or who fails to support the superintendent publicly during controversy (while assuring him privately that he's on his side). Superintendents also complain about board members who ignore the administrative chain of command and attempt to solve problems directly on behalf of a constituent.

Another offending board member is the one who becomes too friendly with members of the staff and privately assures them, "If you have any problems or there's anything you need, just let me know."

The nature of the superintendent's job, with all his actions open to both public and employee scrutiny, makes his every action subject to question. Endless meetings and public appearances are required, which undoubtedly interfere with his private life.

While the board may see the superintendent as the person to implement its policies and achieve its goals, regardless of pressure groups, others in the system may view him differently. The management team usually wants the superintendent to be highly democratic, in contrast to the board's desire for him to be authoritarian. Staff members believe they have valuable contributions to make to the organization and, at a personal level, may even believe their judgments should prevail. Staff members expect the superintendent to back them up, perhaps even when they're wrong, and can't understand at times why the superintendent bends to the wishes of the board. No matter how deeply the superintendent tries to analyze issues and make clear recommendations to the board on the problems at hand, he can't entirely divorce himself from the personalities involved in a highly people-intensive organization.

As a result of these problems, many superintendents today feel they could use more support and understanding from their boards. And surely the board member who takes the time to consider the difficulties facing the superintendent will feel more empathy for him—a feeling that is basic to improving relationships.

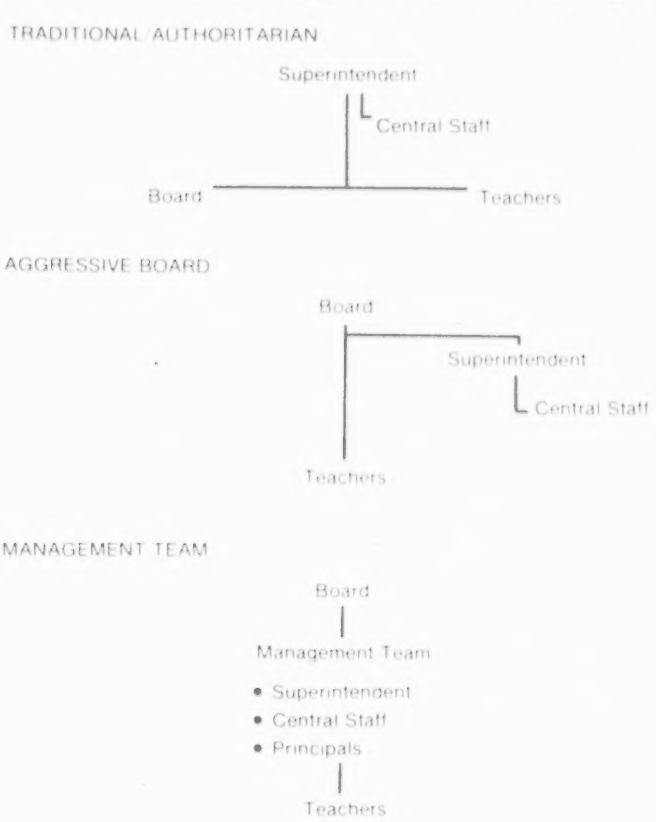
Development of the superintendency

How did this state of affairs come about? A brief summary of the history of superintendent/board relation-

ships may help both parties understand how the different arrangements of the past may affect their relationship today. *Figure 25* shows three such periods of development.

The traditional/authoritarian superintendent was fairly common in the past. Under this arrangement, the

Figure 25—Alternative Concepts of School District Management



superintendent was an educational father-figure viewed with such respect by teachers and boards as to make him a singular and clearly established authority over the entire organization. Boards and teachers were kept as far apart as possible, with principals clearly in the teachers' camp. A few examples of this type can still be found, but the era of authoritarian, paternalistic superintendents is all but over.

The second model, brought on both by more aggressive boards and by a general decline in the popularity of the authoritarian management style, shows the board relating to the teachers, with the superintendent and staff off on one side. Somewhat surprisingly, much of the legal basis for school operation fits in rather well with this model. (Employment contracts, for example, are directly between boards and teachers.) In this model, the superintendent struggles for influence with the board, but usually loses. At best, he serves as an advisor or arbitrator, but not as a manager responsible for results. Consequently, he is usually frustrated and ineffective. Normally, this model will not be found in such explicit form; yet, it accurately depicts the existing board/superintendent relationship in quite a few school districts today.

The third model is one increasingly practiced in well-run school districts and is what most of this book is about. In it, the board makes the management team (under leadership of the superintendent) responsible for educational results of the district. In this third model, the board clearly delegates management authority and holds the team accountable for results.

Where the board and superintendent operate under one of the first two models, the development of management is just about impossible. Effective management can be developed only by holding the management team under leadership of the superintendent responsible for

results and demanding that recommendations be made from the management team to the board. If board/superintendent relationships are to be improved, mutual trust and open interaction are required. Board members should be candid with the superintendent if they don't understand an issue or the information presented—tactful, but to the point. Only when the superintendent knows that board members will not hesitate to clarify matters with him—and only when he takes the time and makes the effort to clarify them—will the board and superintendent begin functioning together in the best interests of the school system.

Ultimately, mutual trust and respect between the board and the superintendent depend upon the superintendent's ability to manage the school system. This includes meeting the district's goals and carrying out the board's policies. Open communication of failures as well as successes should be accepted by the board as a foundation for building future strengths rather than an opportunity for criticizing the superintendent.

How to improve the relationship

A school board seeking to improve its relationship with the superintendent should first be prepared to evaluate its own performance. This is more important today than ever, because the composition of boards has changed to more closely reflect the diversity of the community's population. More housewives, representatives of special interest groups, and people from all walks of life now sit on school boards in place of the business executives and community leaders who used to predominate. An advantage of the modern school board is that it is more representative of the community it serves. A disadvantage, however, is that such boards usually contain less management understanding. Consequently, board members from non-management back-

grounds should capitalize on every opportunity to expand their understanding of education, management and boardsmanship if they are to make wise decisions and develop healthy relationships with the superintendent.

As the board works within the limits of its management responsibilities, it must be careful not to overmanage. Superintendents are virtually unanimous in the opinion that boards must not try to do the management job themselves, either individually or collectively. In fact, it is legally not their role according to statutes in most states. Further, it is against the common sense advice of experienced managers in business and public affairs.

Board members must insist on school district policy changes only where practical and worthwhile, rather than charge off on causes that may be inappropriate and impractical or personal and trivial. Bluntly stated, boards should keep their hands out of the district machinery; otherwise, board/superintendent relations can be severely affected which, in turn, can have a detrimental effect on the entire school system.

It also is important that boards not fire superintendents capriciously, but only when such action is clearly called for by lack of competence or inadequate results. Capricious dismissals have prompted superintendent associations in many states to press for statutory protections that require boards to defend their actions. This is one of several reasons why school boards need procedures for evaluating the superintendent's performance.

Another important step in strengthening the board/superintendent relationship is to build the relationship on solid information. The information should relate primarily to the educational performance of the district. If the board has a way of knowing it when catastrophe hits the district, it also will know

when it has not. The superintendent will be able to defend himself on the basis of factual knowledge, as opposed to opinion and emotion.

A few do's and don'ts of board/superintendent relationships that have been found to be useful are shown in *Figure 26*. These practical suggestions, along with the steps outlined in the foregoing, are vital to the improvement of relationships. Stronger management techniques and skills are essential to this relationship, including the board's methods of evaluating the superintendent and the quality of superintendent recruitment and selection methods.

Figure 26—Some Do's and Don'ts of Board-Superintendent Relationships

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT

DO

1) Talk with and give same information to all board members
2) Keep the board informed about the good and bad
3) Admit your mistakes
4) Tell the board what you believe—not what you think they want to hear
5) Be prepared for board meetings by sending materials out in advance
6) Seek board input on major decisions
7) Get board approval on sensitive regulations
8) Help the board set goals for the district
9) Remain flexible and have a sense of humor
10) Orient and assist new board members

DON'T

1) Embarrass board members
2) Expect 100 percent approval of all your recommendations
3) Overwhelm the board with information

FOR THE BOARD

DO

1) Communicate concerns about the district to the superintendent first
2) Communicate praise as well as blame to the superintendent
3) Avoid bringing surprises up at board meetings
4) Be prepared for board meetings by reading all material sent out in advance

DON'T

1) Embarrass your superintendent
2) Take it personally when the majority of the board votes against your desire
3) Expect the superintendent to act precisely as you want and expect

14/Getting the right superintendent

An important school board responsibility that many board members may never be called upon to fulfill is the selection of a new superintendent. Judging with accuracy in advance how a person will perform in a job is, at best, an imperfect art. School boards, however, should do everything possible to reduce error in recruiting a chief executive officer.

The first step toward a good recruitment and selection program is for the board to get a firm grasp of the district's requirements—the particular conditions, characteristics, and objectives of the district the new superintendent is expected to manage. Only then can the search focus on finding the person best suited to meet district specifications. (Many a mismatch of superintendent and district has occurred because boards have not taken the simple step of determining district needs.)

Four documents will be particularly helpful to the board in understanding its needs. They'll provide both the focus of the search and the direction for the new superintendent's administration in the early months:

1) **A plan for the future**, assessing the district's strengths and weaknesses, identifying important issues, and specifying what the board wants to accomplish.

2) **A plan of organization** that provides the blueprint for what the superintendent's job is, how he is to fit into the organization, and what management staff support is intended. (This plan, of course, does not foreclose changes on the part of the new superintendent.)

3) **A position description** for the superintendent, composed not to fit some hypothetical ideal, but to fit

the needs of the particular district. It should detail the basic job responsibilities and relationships, as well as performance and results expected.

4) A position specification setting forth the qualifications a person must have to fulfill these responsibilities, including essential and desirable experience, performance, education, skills, personal characteristics, compensation levels, as well as likely sources of candidates.

Professional consultants are often called upon to assist boards in the superintendent recruiting and selecting process. Executive recruitment or management consultants provide counsel, apply the time, diligence, and skill required to analyze the district, appraise the candidates, and engineer a match that is most likely to work to the advantage of both the district and the superintendent. It is a rare school board that has such expertise represented among its members, the time available to apply it, or the necessary objectivity.

Professional recruiting is simply a systematic approach to executive replacement. It relies on planning and organizing the task and takes advantage of the best knowledge and skills available. It does not materially alter the importance of human judgment; it does not eliminate the subjectivity that will be applied. It does have the capacity to produce a field of candidates more likely to succeed than those found by more informal approaches. Finally, an outside consultant should help harmonize the opinions of individual board members by getting agreement at the outset on what the board wants. As a result, professional recruiting increases the probability of finding the right superintendent.

A typical recruitment program begins with a comprehensive study that includes:

1) A description of the community, its relationship to

the school system, its educational traditions, and its current goals.

2) A description of the district, including physical characteristics (geography and buildings), student population, and academic, social, cultural, and ethnic make-up.

3) A review of the administration of the departing superintendent—objectives and accomplishments, methods of management, relationships with students, faculty, board, and community, and a critique of performance.

4) A profile of the board itself—description of members and their educational viewpoints or objectives, methods of operation (both in administration and in policy setting), important differences of opinion among members, and a fair statement of any particular problems in board/superintendent relations (particularly if the departure of the superintendent was in any way related to that relationship).

5) A carefully developed description of the qualities the new superintendent is expected to contribute to the district and the specific objectives he is expected to achieve.

Such a study should be accurate, objective, and acceptable to all board members (possibly reflecting divergent points of view).

A good recruitment and selection program obviously includes publicizing the opening for a superintendent. Advertising in professional journals and notifying schools of education are common and helpful approaches, but both have certain weaknesses: They tend to reach superintendents who are looking to move, including some who are failing in their present positions, and introduce a bias toward alumni of a given institution. In addition to these traditional sources, a wide net

should be cast to identify administrators who are successful in other districts.

Once potential candidates are identified, the board should study the characteristics of the districts they are now in and the problems they have faced. The best single indicator of success is satisfactory performance in a similar situation. This means that the recruitment process is likely to include direct approaches to some candidates who have not responded to advertisements and mailings or who have not been proposed by their alma maters.

Satisfactory performance in a similar situation is, however, a criterion with two important limitations. One is that it is so simple and logical that it is likely to seem more important and reliable than it really is. No two situations are exactly alike. The elements that contributed to the candidate's previous success should be thoroughly examined, including the circumstances under which he operated, his relationship to the board, and the personal style of the candidate.

Another limitation in judging previous performance is that some of the candidates may hold positions other than superintendent—perhaps principal, business manager, or assistant superintendent. This situation puts an additional burden on the board to project performance not only in a new district, but in a position the candidate has not previously held.

Once candidates from a variety of sources have been identified, a preliminary screening should begin. Screening requires an exchange of information about the school district on the one side and the candidate on the other. This mutual evaluation must take full consideration of the specifications and requirements laid down by the board.

Screening also must deal with the subjective considerations that will enter into the final decision. For ex-

ample, the style of the superintendent (e.g., authoritarian vs. democratic) must be matched to the character of the district. It is perhaps this as much as anything else that will enable the superintendent and the board to work out the political, social, and personality conflicts that surround education. The difficulty of accomplishing this match—or the failure to recognize its importance—has produced a number of serious mismatches.

Matching executives with positions involves these key steps:

1) Thorough analysis of how well the qualifications of candidates meet carefully drawn specifications, with particular importance placed on prior experience, scale and scope of responsibilities, and performance. Care in this relatively non-judgmental aspect of the search can avoid many of the most serious mismatches. Boards must be on guard not to allow a slick presentation by a candidate to sway their assessment of his qualifications.

2) Careful attention to the chemistry of personal relationships with the board and community. This aspect of selection is almost entirely judgmental, yet vitally important.

3) Thorough reference checking to fully expose the record of performance, results, and relationships in each candidate's previous positions. Digging out the facts, identifying those who are likely to know, melding different opinions, and judging where to adjust the bias—in the candidate's favor or otherwise—require a combination of investigative skill, good judgment, and experience. It is too easy—and unwise—to accept at face value the favorable comments of individuals who are willing (or happy) to see a candidate leave his present job. The real reason for a superintendent's leaving his previous job is significant information for boards.

Professional recruiting does not end with the identification of the candidate and the signing of the contract. It goes on to encompass the orientation of the new superintendent, including a formal program for furnishing him help and information he may need until he settles into the job.

A list of the most common mistakes made in superintendent selection should be reviewed by board members facing the responsibility of getting the right superintendent. Here are the pitfalls to avoid:

1) Not defining district needs, priorities, plans, etc., before beginning the search and thus not having the basis for choosing a superintendent with specific skills, talents, and experience suited to the district.

2) Considering only applicants who are seeking a new job, while ignoring superintendents who fit your specifications but are productive and hard at work where they are.

3) Not checking references thoroughly and objectively, thus failing to know the real track records of candidates.

4) Getting help from people without executive recruitment experience. Or still worse, not getting help at all and therefore having no one with sufficient time, skill, and experience to organize the process and to add objectivity to interpreting district needs and judging candidates.

By no means does education stand alone in facing the complexity of executive recruitment. Industry long ago learned that the performance of a chief executive can not be predicted precisely. The only sure way to learn if a person will work in a top executive job is to put him in it and observe his behavior. Evaluation of the superintendent's performance is a follow-up task the board must not neglect.

15/Appraising the superintendent's performance

The competence and performance of the superintendent are most critical to a school district's over-all accomplishments. And only the school board is in a position to judge the superintendent's performance and its adequacy for the district.

Appraisal of the superintendent not only is one of the most important but one of the most delicate responsibilities confronting the board. Both board members and the superintendent must feel comfortable with the process—one that is open and mutually agreed upon. An old-fashioned exchange of views between the board and the superintendent is healthy. Sometimes the lack of communication between a board and a superintendent becomes more of a problem than the lack of performance by either of them. The board's appraisal policy should specify the time of year the evaluation is to occur, what responsibilities are to be evaluated, any outside assistance that may be required to accomplish the evaluation, and what steps and information are to be involved.

A vitally important principle of evaluation is the need to focus on performance and results. Superintendent appraisal should focus on the educational performance of the district's teachers and the learning results of its students. The superintendent's personal behavior and characteristics, his charisma or lack of it, are only means to these end results. They represent only a small part of the board's assessment.

Educational performance being the measure of a

superintendent's worth to a district, the board and superintendent both must understand the district's goals and objectives. Both should agree on what they're aiming for and have specified indicators of achievement. They also should set down in advance the procedures the superintendent is to use to go about achieving the learning results the board expects.

Each school district is unique in its goals and objectives; these provide the context within which a superintendent's performance must be evaluated. Because each district is unique, a standardized checklist of criteria for rating a superintendent is not enough. A printed form cannot take the place of getting the facts on the performance of your district, assessing them, and determining how they match goals and expectations, and taking action to ensure that the district gets the results it wants and needs.

Five areas of superintendent responsibility should be examined by the board to help determine its chief executive officer's effectiveness:

1) Learning results and program quality. The learning results of a school district being its most important product, evaluation of the superintendent should begin here. Specific targets of accomplishment should be set at the beginning of the year by the superintendent and approved by the board as a plan of operation for the coming year. Obviously, it is impossible to evaluate performance at the end of the year—or to compare one year's performance with another's—without having established the results that are expected to be accomplished during the year. Such targets may be student test scores, growth of performance or lack of it, development of programs, curriculum, organization or operational changes, staff development aimed at improved learning results, or consumer satisfaction.

In addition to appraising the superintendent on the

basis of district learning results, the board must look at program quality from the angle of public acceptance—a tricky task. The board perhaps should tolerate a program of less than first-rate quality if student/parent enthusiasm is high while results on paper don't look that good. Likewise a program with impressive learning results—say computer math—may not be one that students are happy with.

2) Leadership. Any chief executive must draw out the best efforts of the people at all levels in the organization if it is to accomplish its purposes in the most effective way possible. While doing this, the superintendent must deal with both pressures from the board and negotiations with the staff, and at the same time maintain the respect of the staff and the confidence of the board. Boards must keep in mind that styles of leadership differ widely; many superintendents who are neither fine public speakers nor outstanding teachers can be successful in giving the leadership a district requires. It's bringing out the best in others that's important.

3) Board operations. Although it is the board itself that must take responsibility for its own operating performance, one of the important aspects of a superintendent's job is to help the board become an effective agency of the district. Partly this involves giving board members the support they need for board meeting arrangements, agendas, background material, alternative decisions, analysis of information, and recommendations.

4) Relationships. The superintendent is supposed to establish and maintain constructive relationships with a diverse and demanding group of people—the public, teachers, staff, other members of the management team, and the board. It is asking too much that he be loved and respected by all. Still, the superintendent's performance during the year in terms of relationships

should be subject to review by the board. This judgment must be tempered in light of the circumstances at the time. Board members also should recognize the potential for undercutting the superintendent or other management personnel by unions, disgruntled parents, or other groups. They must remember that union interests sometimes are better served if management/board relations are disrupted.

5) Management. Boards should look to the superintendent for recommending and developing the managerial competence within the district needed to accomplish its goals—present and future. The ability of the district to establish goals in the public interest and to achieve learning results in line with those goals should be a major element of the superintendent's evaluation by the board. Evaluation of the superintendent is one of the board's most powerful tools for controlling school districts in the public interest. As in any position of public trusteeship, school board members must do the best they can to develop a system of evaluation, incorporate professional evaluation skills when required, and wind up with an assessment based on relevant information and competent judgment.

Among the materials available to help school boards is the program developed by Booth and Glaub for the Illinois Association of School Boards. In addition to an explanatory handbook, called *Planned Appraisal of the Superintendent*, this program includes a series of exercises through which the board and superintendent build their own evaluation system.

16/How effective is board performance?

One of the most difficult and traumatic things for any of us is to evaluate our own performance. Yet, self-recognition of areas needing improvement is the first step toward better performance.

The community has the opportunity to pass judgment on each board member's performance at every election. But this is not enough for the conscientious board member who wants to have an idea of how he's doing before the votes are counted. Every year board members should assess themselves objectively according to role recognition, relationships with others, performance at board meetings, and self-improvement. *Figure 27* gives criteria the board can use to gauge its performance. Portions of it can be used to obtain feedback from board colleagues.

Even the experienced board member must constantly strive to focus his efforts on the essential tasks of governing the school system. The hardest part of boardmanship is learning what the job is and what it isn't. Members must differentiate between policy development, goal setting, and performance monitoring on the one hand, and the nitty-gritty of daily school district operations on the other. The former constitutes the board's job; the latter does not.

The working relationship between the board and the superintendent is also a troublesome area. One can't talk about the board's job without also talking about the superintendent's. For example, how does the board member know whether a certain decision should be made by the board or the superintendent? Boards are told that they make policy and the superintendent

makes administrative decisions within the guidelines provided by the policy. The distinction between what boards and superintendents do should be made clearer, however, because it is easy for boards and superintendents to reverse their proper roles.

Key relationships

The relationship between the board member and superintendent can become difficult if the board member interprets a superintendent's recommendation on a policy matter as essentially making the decision for the board. The board should receive the superintendent's reasons along with his recommendations. If the background information doesn't logically support the recommendation, the superintendent shouldn't expect the board to endorse it. When a superintendent recommends a policy decision to the board, he should support it and be able to satisfy the board that it is the best possible decision. He also should present the board with alternatives if available. The board member must keep in mind that his job is to keep the expert (superintendent) honest, not to serve as the expert himself.

In their relationships with each other, board members must be able to disagree in an agreeable way. Naturally, there are times when board members disagree and split votes result. In these situations, the key to working well with board colleagues is for members in the minority to accept the majority decision and lend their support to make the proposal work. The board member who votes against something is just as responsible, legally, as the other members for the success or failure of the proposition. Besides that, it simply does more harm than good to the school district for a minority faction to publicly criticize majority decisions. Like successful politicians, board members should learn and practice the art of compromise—meaning there is more than one way to achieve goals.

Figure 27—Self-Evaluation for School Board Members

	Poor	Need Improvement	Satisfactory
ROLE RECOGNITION			
1) I recognize the Board's role to govern the school district as a policy maker, not to run day-to-day operations	_____	_____	_____
2) I recognize the superintendent as chief executive of the district	_____	_____	_____
3) I recognize that the board has authority to act only at an official board meeting	_____	_____	_____
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS			
4) I trust the superintendent as chief advisor of the board	_____	_____	_____
5) I work through established channels when seeking information	_____	_____	_____
6) I respect the right of other board members, as well as the superintendent and staff, to express their views even when contrary to mine	_____	_____	_____
7) I work to achieve harmonious relations with other board members	_____	_____	_____
8) I avoid petty criticism of staff or citizens	_____	_____	_____
PERFORMANCE AT BOARD MEETINGS			
9) I vote on the basis of what seems best for all students of the district	_____	_____	_____

	Poor	Need Improvement	Satisfactory
10) I do my homework on scheduled agenda items prior to meetings	_____	_____	_____
11) I voice my opinion frankly—avoiding secrecy or hidden agendas	_____	_____	_____
12) I accept the principle of majority rule, especially when I am in the minority	_____	_____	_____
13) I avoid using board meetings for personal advancement	_____	_____	_____
14) I accept criticism, whether directed at the board or me personally	_____	_____	_____
SELF IMPROVEMENT			
15) I seek to learn about the district, the schools, and education in general	_____	_____	_____
16) I build open relationships with news media	_____	_____	_____
17) I build strong, harmonious relationships with the public	_____	_____	_____
18) I attend local community and school events	_____	_____	_____
19) I attend board-related meetings and state or national workshops or meetings	_____	_____	_____

Performance at meetings

Each board member knows after every meeting whether he was prepared for the topics covered. To be informed, he must do his homework and will occasionally need to call on the superintendent for background information. The superintendent has an important task in seeing that the board gets the information it needs to make decisions and to understand district operations. The community expects board members to be knowledgeable about school affairs. Nothing looks worse, veteran board members say, than a board member who can't answer simple questions of fact. Whether the board member gives candid opinions and votes his beliefs, of course, he alone can know. Board members should have no personal axes to grind. If they do, they aren't representing the public that elected them.

Criticism is a part of every board member's life, including some that is justified and some that isn't. The board member or administrator who takes criticism personally and returns it with insults doesn't have the emotional maturity that board service demands.

Board performance also is watched by the public to determine the extent to which members champion the causes of individual pupils and parents. The board represents all taxpayers and students in the district, not one segment of the community—be it political subdivision, sports fans, or special interest groups of one religious faith, race, or ethnic background. When a board member puts the desires of a group over what is best for the total district, factions and strife develop on the board and in the community. Board unity disintegrates and so does sound management of the educational enterprise.

Self-improvement

There isn't a board member or professional educator

today who can't learn something new about education in his own community. In addition, local board members need to study the problems and potential changes in local government, business, and public agencies. They have to keep an eye on the state legislature, Congress and the courts, which more and more are affecting public schools. Board members must put forth the time to become involved in working with groups related to the school district. The contributing board member must be willing to keep up with what is happening on the local, state, and national scenes, because they all affect what boards can and cannot do.

Board meetings that work

A school board exists only when it meets. This is why the quality and effectiveness of board meetings are so important. Almost entirely through meetings, and the resulting policies that are developed, boards exercise their governing powers over the school district's operations. Some contend that board meetings as they now exist are largely ritualistic, dealing only with trivial matters. But school board meetings do not have to be dull, drawn out, or functionary. Cyril 0. House, in *The Effective Board*, (Associated Press, 1960) gives these suggestions:

1) Reduce board meeting procedures as much as possible to routine, so decisions don't have to be continually re-made about them.

2) Plan every board meeting thoroughly.

3) Insist that all reports to the board be clear, concise, complete, and relevant to the agenda.

4) Reserve as much board meeting time as possible for serious discussion of important issues as opposed to administrivia.

5) Permit as much cordial informality as possible

within the context of suitable decorum and efficiency.

6) Don't allow meetings to drag on and on. Overly long meetings invite tedium and capricious actions that are later regretted.

The place where board meetings are held must be conducive to the meeting of minds and the making of decisions. The room must be well-lighted and ventilated. The table at which the board meets should be large enough so that members can spread out agenda and supporting materials. Work space and work papers should be available for the press and staff, seating arrangements for visitors should be available and comfortable, and visitors should receive copies of the agenda. The board should have ready access to standard references: the minutes book, budget documents, policy manual, administrative rules, *Robert's Rules of Order*, and state statutes governing schools.

Vital to the orderly conduct of business is the use of parliamentary rules. *Robert's Rules* is not as stuffy and stiff-necked about board meeting protocol as some would suspect. In fact, *Robert's Rules* advocates streamlining the meeting procedures of small boards. The latest edition, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, points out that the formality necessary in a large assembly hinders the business of small boards. The rules governing board meetings should be different from those in large deliberative bodies. These time-saving rules sanctioned by *Robert's Rules* for school boards should be considered:

1) Board members are not required to formally obtain the floor before making motions or speaking; they can do this just as effectively while seated.

2) Informal discussion of a subject is permissible while no motion is pending.

3) The president or board chairman can speak in dis-

cussion without rising or leaving the chair. He can make motions and should vote on all questions.

Court decisions and *Robert's Rules* remain firm on one point: A board is not a board when it is not in session. For example: "The personal approval of a proposed action obtained separately by telephone or individual interview from every member of the board still does not have the approval of the board since the members were not present in one room where they could mutually debate the matter if they wished." When action is necessary in an emergency, it must still be ratified at the next regular meeting of the board to become an official act.

The superintendent of schools is the person responsible for planning effective school board meetings. The superintendent, usually after conference with the board president, prepares the meeting agenda and sees that both agenda and necessary background information are distributed well in advance of the meeting. The superintendent should encourage and aid citizens who wish to address the board. He also must strive to keep the meeting within reasonable length, while trying to be fair to the public. Matters which taxpayers want to discuss often can more satisfactorily be handled in conference with the superintendent and/or his staff.

A capable board president is the key to an efficient and effective school board meeting. Chairing board meetings today, especially when the board room becomes an arena for conflict, is not easy. It requires intelligence, an even temper, firmness in administering meeting discipline, and skills in interpersonal relations. Because of the special skills required, school board members should not take turns with the board presidency. Boards that want to exercise leadership will put the best person in the president's chair and keep that person there. Taking turns or using longevity of service to

determine the board's presidency usually proves inadequate for the board's need for leadership.

Reasoned arguments and vigorous debate are always welcome when board members come together to hammer out important decisions. But neither vicious nor subtle personal attacks or other disorders need be tolerated. The board itself, guided by its president, sets the tone and serves as the model for citizens in attendance.

Board members should insist that part of every meeting be devoted to the educational program. Unfortunately, too many meetings are devoted exclusively to lengthy debates over the color of school lockers, the merits of resodding the football field, painting the halls, or whether the superintendent gave enough information in the preboard meeting information packet. Periodic reports should focus on educational programs or issues. The director of reading might report on the progress in each grade in a new reading program. The physical education department chairman might explain how students are being prepared to carry athletic skills over into life. Such presentations should include staff participation and, although primarily for the benefit of the board, yield dividends for the news media and the public. The public and the press can see that the board understands clearly what its major responsibilities are, and taxpayers are informed about how their money is used by the schools.

Executive sessions

Not too many years from now, school officials probably will reflect on the recent past and remember executive sessions and the opportunities that once existed for private discussion of critical school matters. Many states, including Florida, California, Illinois, and Minnesota, have legislated "Sunshine Laws," which require that deliberations on school matters be held in public.

Other states have more recently adopted similar laws requiring that all public business be discussed at open meetings. The U.S. Congress also has joined the same trend by opening most of its committee deliberations.

School districts in states not mandating open meetings often win favor with the public and news media by adopting open meeting policies. Many people feel that the aura of honesty created by open meetings does much to build public confidence in education. The trend clearly is in that direction, and legislators championing the cause have public support. Boards should consider reducing the number of closed meetings, even if they feel strongly that such meetings are productive. Many arguments against open meetings are viewed skeptically by the post-Watergate public and press, who interpret such arguments as an attempt to hide something or cover up subjects that might not be acceptable to the public.

Whether a board wants to adopt its own "Sunshine Law" is something it will have to decide for itself. Even without such a policy, the board can reduce undesirable side effects of executive sessions. For example, the board can establish (in its operating procedures) that no executive sessions will be held once the public meeting has begun, except for questions involving staff or student personnel. Comprehensive work sessions, if permitted, can familiarize board members with the issues so that they are prepared to vote at meetings. It is often the "surprise" agenda item that irritates board members and results in the cry for an executive session. If closed sessions must be held, they should be scheduled before or after the regular meeting.

Citizens who experience the mid-meeting executive session know the anguish of waiting two or three hours for a board to reconvene. They wonder what is being talked about as time drags on. They begin to suspect

that something is being hidden from them, even if it isn't. Reporters prod school officials with leading questions about the reason for the executive session, and unfavorable headlines sometimes result. Some board members who lose an argument in executive session often use the rest of the open meeting to regain their losses. If an executive session is essential, announce to the audience the topic of the private discussion, the reason for the need for privacy, and the approximate time the session will last.

A "meeting on meetings" at least once a year is a necessity for the board/management team if it is to function must effectively. As cobblers are said not to take the time to mend their own shoes, or mechanics repair their own cars, most school boards don't take time to evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness. *Figure 28* contains a checklist that can be used to determine whether board meetings need improvement. A tally of responses will reveal strengths and weaknesses.

School board images

Robert Leininger, formerly a district superintendent and now Illinois State Superintendent of Education, once described how he thought board members are perceived by the public, the staff, and the superintendent:

> The community looks upon board members as the watchdogs, as the champions of the people. They perceive board members as looking out for the public interest as far as costs to the taxpayer are concerned. The public looks upon the board as a policy-making body—the group that makes the rules for the operation of the schools. They view the board as the final authority in making decisions and believe it can be swayed by public pressure and mass attack.

Teachers and other staff members, however, look upon the board as a vehicle to get administrative rules changed. Board members are looked upon as puppets to special interest groups, or as "yes men" to the superin-

tendent. The staff feels that the board of education can be swayed by pressure.

Most superintendents, Leininger observed, see board members as being unable to measure public opinion accurately. They often react vigorously to a few telephone calls. Superintendents believe, too, that board members fail to work through proper channels and too often express their individual opinions and not the opinion of the entire board. Also, board members need to do their homework more thoroughly and not get involved in administrative detail, superintendents say.

At least once a year, board members should meet with the superintendent and look over accomplishments and problems. Above all, board members should look beyond the crisis of the moment and keep their perspective on the real goals of the system's educational programs.

David Byrne, a retired Illinois superintendent and past president of the Illinois Association of School Administrators, once described boards as falling into these categories:

The Rubber Stamp Board: This board is administratively dominated, and/or made up of disinterested board members. Meetings are usually very short and functionary.

The One-Person Board: This board has one member who exerts leadership, dominates the other board members, does all the talking, and by the use of sarcasm and cajoling is often able to get all members to yield. In this situation, administrators are pawns. One member shapes the board.

Nigy Sog (Now I Gotcha, You Son of a Gun) Board: This board gets involved in administrative detail and puts the administration in an adversary relationship. The board makes the superintendent ap-

Figure 28—Checklist for Board Meeting Evaluation

___ 1) PLANNING. Has the board developed adequate planning procedures for determining agenda and preparing back-up reports and briefings?

___ 2) PRE-MEETING DISSEMINATION. Has the board developed adequate procedures for getting meeting materials and notices in the hands of board members, the press, and public leaders two or three days in advance of meeting dates?

___ 3) PRE-MEETING CONFERENCE. Do the board president and superintendent confer before each meeting to review upcoming business, to clarify agenda items, and to anticipate possible problem areas?

___ 4) THE SETTING. Has the board found and furnished the best possible setting for its meetings?

___ 5) HOMEWORK. Do all board members study the agenda, read the reports, and come to meetings prepared to contribute to substantive discussions and not waste meeting time by going over matters that were already included in the pre-meeting folder?

___ 6) PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT. Has the board established an orderly method whereby the public—including students—may get a hearing at board meetings? Does the board president make public visitors feel welcome in the board room?

___ 7) PROPER ROLE. Has the board developed a clear policy as to the kinds of matters which need *not* be brought to the board's atten-

pear weak, likes to nitpick and harass, and reprimands the superintendent in public. Board members are apt to lash out with pet peeves and old problems. This board does not make for good management, makes long-range planning difficult, causes needed experimentation to fall by the wayside, creates job insecurity, puts emotional strain on the administrative staff, and thwarts recruitment of top quality people. Obviously, the school system suffers.

The United Team Board: This board and the super-

tion and which may be handled by administrative action?

___ 8) RECOMMENDATIONS. Does the superintendent expedite business by specifying his "Recommended Action" on each major agenda item?

___ 9) ADVICE. Does the board encourage the superintendent to invite staff specialists to board meetings to supply back-up advice and knowledge on recommended proposals?

___10) PACE. Do meetings begin on time? During meetings, does the board president keep an eye on the clock so that adequate time can be provided for important matters?

___11) CLARIFICATION. Does the board president clarify each agenda item? Does he clarify—for the benefit of board, press, and public—specific goals to be achieved? Is he adept at summarizing arguments before bringing matters to a vote?

___12) CONTROL. Does the board president keep discussions to the subject at hand? Does he bring members to order when they interrupt the speaker who has the floor—or talk while the speaker is talking? Is he firm when firmness is required?

___13) POST-MEETING DISSEMINATION. Does the administration see to it that staff, students, and the public are immediately informed as to the results of "last night's meeting?"

___14) POLICIES. Has the board developed an adequate set of written policies or by-laws on Board Meeting Procedures?

From: ON BOARD, National School Boards Association

intendent understand their respective roles. There is courteous, friendly, and open communication. The board is kept well-informed and is willing to spend time in developing workable policies. The board has trust in the administration, and helps present the educational program to the public in a positive way.

Most boards want to have the image of the united team board, but many do not operate this way. Every board should examine the current state of its affairs objectively, using the approach in *Figure 28*.

17/The new board member—how to cope

New board members may feel overwhelmed at first by the responsibility of their position. They find themselves facing both public commendation and criticism. But they also can find comfort in the reminder that the board's power is collective only—that it is shared with other board members who are effective legally only when acting in an officially constituted meeting of the board of education.

Before the meeting

A new board member should take with him to that first meeting the realization that his job is to personally stay out of the day-to-day operation of the school district. If the board is to hold the superintendent accountable for effective management of the district, it must work through him as chief executive officer. He implements the policies and decisions of the board and makes recommendations to the board on all matters that come before it, except those relating to internal board operations and his contractual relationship with the board.

Prior to board meetings, members must complete their homework. They should study the agenda and supporting information so they clearly understand the issues and alternatives, and they should not hesitate to ask for additional information from the superintendent if they need it.

During the meeting

The board's functions are performed in open meetings, announced in advance. Debating and deciding complicated issues in a public forum takes some getting

used to. According to veteran members, it may take a couple of years to feel fully comfortable working in open meetings.

Rarely do boards meet in closed session, and even after they do, votes on official actions must be taken in open meetings.

Board members should not be embarrassed to question past practices of previous boards. Only through asking questions can they gain an insight into how and why the organization is functioning as it is. This knowledge will provide the member either with more or less respect for the organization, management, staff, and programs. At the very least, it will provide an understanding of the problems that must be resolved and the opportunities for improvement that exist.

When a board member is sworn in, he becomes a member of a collecti body legally responsible and accountable for an op ating corporation—with all its strengths and weakn ses. A board member may not have been a party to the problems that exist—for that matter neither may the management team—but both must attempt to cooperatively identify and resolve those problems. The organization must not be prevented from delivering the educational results expected by the community.

The new school board member quickly will discover a natural tendency to become overly concerned with the district budget, bills, or building repairs at the expense of more important roles of defining purposes, setting goals, and monitoring results. Psychologically, it is more reassuring for the board to deal with concrete problems rather than with philosophies and principles.

Another fact of life that board members must learn to live with—though it may be frustrating—is that their decisions will be questioned. Decisions that are perfectly logical at one time may seem ridiculous later. Compli-

cating board decisions are actions by state legislatures, courts, the federal government, state boards of education, chief state school officers, and various other agencies who are at work around the clock prescribing what can and cannot be done. Then there are the conflicting opinions among professional educators on "the best way to go." The public, too, will be heard from.

The process of group decision making will be new to some board members. The process is enhanced by an adequate supply of objective information and courses of action offered by the management team. Where information is insufficient, some board members may reveal their personal biases, which are subject to challenge by other members. No board needs internal bickering. Once interpersonal rapport among members is damaged, it can take months to re-establish—if ever. Board team work and constructive interaction are at the heart of shared decision making.

Board members also must try to separate personal beliefs from the greater public interest. None of us likes to have our personal ideas or beliefs challenged in public, but this is part of the board member's lot. There may be times when laws require actions contrary to personal beliefs and times when a member's view will not be that of the board majority.

When everyone agrees, decisions are easy. Many decisions, however, produce split votes, and part of the board will have to accept the will of the majority and continue functioning. Inherent in successful group decision making is the necessity to listen to other points of view, either accepting or modifying them, so that a consensus can develop. All of this, by statute in most states, must be done in a fishbowl atmosphere, with public displays of personal beliefs and attitudes. The most successful board member at a meeting sometimes is the one who leaves some things unsaid.

After the meeting

Outside the board room, members must exercise discretion. They should be careful when talking about school matters in public or in casual conversations with friends. A board member's every word can have considerable impact on public opinion—even legal implications. In one district, a teacher who was not re-hired claimed that a board member (and the superintendent) talked about her case out in the community. She sued the district for defamation of character. Board members should withhold comments on problems related to individual employees and students.

One difficult adjustment for board members is dealing with the constant verbal bombardment from constituents—about school, staff, programs, and board action. In most communities, there are frequent rumors circulating about the schools and their employees. One skill for a board member to master quickly is the art of handling gossip. Often the best reaction is to not dignify gossip with a statement or comment; suggest instead that it be put in writing and sent to the board office.

Criticism is a different matter. Board members should pay attention to it, listen to it, and share it with the appropriate person, usually the superintendent. No board member wants to appear uninformed about board or district matters, but board members cannot know all of the details of the district's operations, and saying so is not a poor reflection on their performance.

Pressures of many kinds and from many sources come with the job of school board member. New members might as well expect them—formal (at board meetings) or informal (on the street or over dinner). The best advice on how to cope with pressures is to make no promises, no deals—they may come back to haunt you.

Board members need to be particularly cautious in their contacts with members of the staff. Although

board members have no individual authority, there will be members of the community and staff who do not recognize this limitation. Thus, when board members offer suggestions to the staff, they can be easily interpreted as directives, with unfortunate and unintended consequences embarrassing to all concerned. Most problems should be referred to the building principal or the superintendent. Or it could be suggested that a letter be sent to the board president. Most experienced board members find it awkward to act as a message bearer for citizens, and soon learn not to commit themselves until they have heard and analyzed both sides of a story.

Board members also should refrain from assuming special privileges in visiting schools. A board member who has children in school will find it advisable to reassure the principal, teachers and his neighbors that no special attention is wanted for himself or his children.

In Summary

It should be clear by now that management is the process that links the board room with the class room. With effective management, the school board can direct and control the performance of its schools. Without effective management, the board and the schools function as separate and unrelated entities.

Fueled by the press and a wide variety of critics, the public demands to know why the schools are failing to meet their responsibilities. This may be somewhat unfair to American education, which has good grounds to claim world leadership in comprehensive education. Public demands with respect to educational performance are paralleled by the teachers' discovery of union power and the possibility of making effective demands not only for better pay but for a more participative and fairer style of management. At the same time, teachers display a growing concern for what they view as inadequate communication and confidence with school boards and administrators. These concerns may be compounded by the rapid aging of the teaching force in the face of declining enrollments, by the uncertainty created because of threats of staff reduction, and by perceived unfairness in evaluation and reward systems for teachers.

Little wonder that boards of education and their management teams sometimes feel caught in the middle, uncertain of the nature and limits of their authority.

Management that aims at maintaining and improving student learning while meeting the needs of parents, teachers, and students seems essential. If every school board could grasp the importance of management and take whatever action is practical at a local level to move toward better management, there is little doubt that educational performance could be con-

siderably improved.

Most school managers have proven themselves commendably adept at handling human relations, not only with children but among staff, parents, and others as well. However, they have generally failed to develop the analytical and quantitative approaches that have paid off handsomely in such other fields as agriculture and business. There is little doubt that major opportunities for strengthening educational performance lie in the use of information about student learning and consumer and staff satisfaction. Such information, as well as good human relations and communications, are essential to meet the management requirements of a school district. These problems and needs should be recognized as exciting challenges rather than avoided or ignored.

LEADERSHIP TOOLS APPENDIX

This special section provides guidance for the school board and superintendent who want to take the initiative in making their schools more effective. It was produced by the staff of the Illinois Association of School Boards as an appendix to the 1991 edition of *Effective Schools Through Effective Management*.

THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

"The most important characteristics of effective schools are strong instructional leadership, a safe and orderly climate, school-wide emphasis on basic skills, high teacher expectations for student achievement and continuous assessment of pupil progress."

What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning, U.S. Department of Education, 1986

A vast body of research also describes the effective school as a place where academic performance is rewarded. . . . where teachers and students view the principal as an effective leader focused on excellence in curriculum and instruction. . . . where the school has a clear mission and everyone knows what it is and pursues it single-mindedly. . . . where classroom efficiency creates maximum time for learning. . . . and where parents are treated as important partners in the education of their children.

Effective schools and the board-superintendent relationship

Most school board members and administrators know a good school when they see one. Research clearly documents the characteristics.

Unfortunately, school board members and administrators who yearn to see their students, teachers and principals engaged in the single-minded pursuit of excellence face some large obstacles. By their nature, public institutions depend upon rules and procedures to ensure accountability. Those rules and procedures, unfortunately, tend to spawn bureaucracy at the expense of individual effort and creativity in the schools and in the classrooms. In fact, many rules simply protect the central office bureaucracy that wrote them while prompting teachers and other employees to circle their wagons in self defense. Such is the nature of organizations.

Public accountability also keeps the institution in the middle of a political arena where rewards and punishments typically discourage the very characteristics an effective school must acquire. Ask any administrator who has tried to remediate the work performance of a well-connected employee.

School boards and administrators who cannot lay claim to effective schools, then, are left to ponder: *How do we overcome these obstacles and bring about good schools? How do we bridge the gap between policy and practice, between what we want and what we have?*

A common response is to seek improved funding. Relative affluence bears mightily on the variety of school programs and services available to students. It affects

staff salaries, class size, and other variables that money can buy. But money does not buy a school climate that focuses on academic performance and the needs of children. While money can ease the way, the qualities that distinguish effective schools cannot be purchased or "ordered" into existence by legislative or policy edict.

Professional integrity v. public control

A good school is the product of leadership that balances the school's need for professional integrity with the public's need for ultimate control. Unlike the private sector, where profit provides a common mission for both owner and manager, public governance readily subjects the school enterprise to divergent politics and personal agendas. (Teachers and principals in some districts view themselves as successful, not *because* of the school board and central office, but *in spite of* them.)

Effective leadership means overcoming political and bureaucratic obstacles so that everyone in the organization can focus on a vision of educational excellence. It helps if that vision is reflected in a precise mission supported by the school board and superintendent. However, often that leadership comes only because a principal is willing to accept personal risk and work around the obstacles of a bureaucratic administration or a politicized board of education. Effectiveness under such conditions is a matter of the right person landing in the principal's job.

Ideally, however, leadership begins with a board and administration willing to assume the risks of delegating authority to principals and teachers while holding themselves accountable to the community. Such courageous leadership is feasible only where the board is certain that the students, teachers and the principal *inside* the school share common goals and values with the community *outside* the school.

In fact, school boards must not only encourage effec-

tive management and effective teaching by empowering the people who work for them, they must develop a site-based strategy that requires it. If the purpose of management is to ensure the best possible outcomes for an enterprise, the purpose of governance must be to ensure the best possible management. School boards, therefore, must nurture effective management. There is no other way.

Put simply:

- The board and superintendent must know, in some detail, what the school district's mission is designed to accomplish in terms of student learning outcomes, parent and teacher satisfaction, and fiscal performance;
- The board must delegate to the superintendent the authority necessary to pursue the intended results vigorously and fearlessly;
- The superintendent must provide the board with truthful and convincing evidence of how well the district is doing.

That, in a nutshell, describes the separate but equal purposes of the superintendent and the school board.

Power—hoarded or delegated

If the school board and district administration wish to promote excellence at the school level, they cannot hoard the power to act and to create. The school board must delegate real power, through the superintendent and central office staff, to the school. Moreover, the board must not permit its delegated power to be hoarded by the superintendent or central office.

An effective school depends upon a school *system* that empowers students, parents, teachers and principals to create a learning community. Without adequate power, those who work and learn within the four walls of the school flounder—and only the school board or the super-

intendent has available the power that those people need to be successful.

Superintendents, therefore, must have the latitude to pass authority to their principals at the building level—and principals must possess the leadership qualities essential to get the best their teachers and students have to give.

People at all levels of the organization must be confident that, when they make a decision they are authorized to make, there will be no repercussions from higher ups, including the school board.

School board service

School board members should derive far more pleasure from their service when the board functions as a purveyor of values and monitor of performance. In particular, school boards that wrestle with daily operational matters will find their work much less exhausting and much more stimulating when they shift their focus to the real purposes of their schools—which is effective teaching and learning.

The constructive delegation of authority is the essence of effective governance.

By the same token, superintendents who are given a clear understanding of their mandate and their authority should find their jobs much more rewarding. They will be able to work with principals and teachers in a more confident and positive manner and empower those people to do their best for children.

Once they focus effectively on their awesome leadership responsibilities, board members and superintendents alike should find themselves confronted with fewer problems related to personalities, board-staff politics, and other issues that get in the way of the real mission of the schools.

Leadership tools

The Leadership Tools that follow will help the school board and superintendent who want to encourage their principals and teachers to strive for excellence. Exercises are designed to help the school board and superintendent reach a mutual understanding of how they will work together toward "effective schools through effective management."

The first step is to focus on a vision for the school district from which a mission statement can be derived—"A Value System for Your Schools." The second step is to examine decision making in your district—who makes which decisions, who is consulted, who is held accountable—in an effort to get the right kinds of decisions into the hands of the right people. The third and final step addresses accountability—what information will the school board need to regularly monitor the performance of students, teachers, and the school system itself?

These exercises will help the school board execute a responsible delegation of power and hold responsible those to whom that power is delegated.

A value system for your schools

Research describes the effective school as a place where students, parents, teachers and other employees enjoy a healthy and coherent sense of community. They know why they are there; they enjoy what they do; they are committed to their mission and take mutual pride in their successes.

Research also describes this school as a *culture* and the principal as a *cultural leader* whose personal vision creates both a sense of identity and sense of direction.

Obviously, not all schools are blessed with this sense of community and desire for excellence. Not all are blessed with visionary leadership. The first step a school board must take on the road to effective schools, therefore, is to be certain that its policies encourage the right kind of leadership at the building level.

A school board that does not provide constructive leadership at the district level has no right to expect leadership at the building level. The school board must pave the way for its superintendent and principals.

Effective school board leadership requires:

- a vision of what the schools ought to be like or to become;
- a coherent value system that reflects what is important and what is not;
- constant and consistent communication of those values by both word and deed;
- measures of whether those values actually govern the schools.

Visionary leadership

School board members are too far removed to mold schools to a personal vision in the way that principals can. But boards can ensure that their principals work toward clear, districtwide values and goals and insist that they develop and use their leadership capacities.

In fact, much of the criticism leveled at boards of education involves the obstacles that politics and bureaucracy set before the professional educator. Visionary boards, therefore, will remove those obstacles and create an environment in which visionary principals and teachers will flourish in concert with community aspirations.

Through effective leadership, your school board can make the schools be what they need to be and what the community wants them to be.

School boards must ask themselves:

- What do we want our schools to be like?
- What must our schools do to prepare students for life?
- What characteristics or measures will we examine to judge success or failure of our schools?
- What kind of management does this school district need?
- What does this board want to accomplish and how do we go about it?

To get your thinking started, examine both the "effective schools research" and what other school boards have set down as standards for the operation of their schools.

Exhibit A presents some standards established several years ago by the Board of Education of Minooka Elementary District 201. These are all measurable standards, or goals. Many of a community's most impor-

EXHIBIT A

Minooka Elementary District 201 described an effective school as one in which:

- 95 percent of its students achieve grade level objectives as measured by criterion referenced tests;
- the mean achievement level of students is at one standard deviation above the mean achievement level of all mean-matched students as measured by norm referenced tests;
- the differences between groups based on sex, race, and socio-economic status is no greater than five percentile points on criterion referenced tests nor greater than seven percentile points on norm referenced tests;
- the attendance level of students is 96 percent average daily attendance or higher;
- the attendance level of staff is 96.5 percent average daily attendance or higher;
- 10 percent of the eligible students are enrolled in advanced placement classes, with 80 percent receiving a 3,4, or 5 on A.P. tests;
- 85 percent of the employees enjoy and appreciate working at the school;
- 85 percent of the parents believe their children are receiving a good education;
- 90 percent of the students believe they are obtaining a good education;
- standards of the state and regional accreditation agencies are met.

tant aims for schools may not be so easily measured, however, and that should not make those aims any less important.

And what about the school board's stand on such values as human rights, honesty, respect, kindness, justice, moral courage and the principles of representative government? Boards that assume these values are givens may inadvertently be communicating a low priority. If the board does not demonstrate that it values a particular virtue, teachers and students may not value it either.

A school board that expects its management team to provide real leadership in developing a healthy school culture should set forth its beliefs regarding:

- the preeminence of both human and academic values;
- the legal and ethical conduct of all school employees;
- the treatment of students as individual human beings;
- the importance of cooperation and teamwork;
- professional staff relationships.

Goals or beliefs regarding the humane treatment of students, professional relationships among teachers and administrators, and a caring school climate may not appear to be readily evaluated. But these are important values, nonetheless, because they represent limitations on the exercise of authority and there are factors that can be assessed as indicators of relative success or failure.

The most important sources of help a school board should seek include the district's own teachers, administrators, parents and others in the community. Getting the community involved in defining a "sense of mission" for your schools could be the school board's most vital contribution to educational excellence. While it is easier said than done, there are several ways that school boards reach out to their communities. None of them are perfect; all have advantages and disadvantages that vary with local circumstances. A board that is truly insistent on identifying a common purpose for school and community might combine several strategies for best results. Three of the most popular vehicles for community involvement are citizens committees, surveys and focus groups.

Citizens committees

A citizens committee may best serve your needs if you want citizens to help develop a vision, research and write a mission statement or curriculum goals, for example. Committee membership can be limited to a workable number, and a committee can be made directly answerable to the board and the public.

Strengths: Citizens advisory committees are particularly effective when they're formed for a specific task.

An advantage is that members of the committee can be expected to understand and communicate committee findings. A committee also can open an ongoing dialogue between citizens and school officials, meanwhile allowing for in-depth exploration of the best thinking of individuals chosen for their special interests or abilities.

Weaknesses: A major disadvantage: a committee must be relatively small to function effectively. That may make the committee unrepresentative unless members are selected to represent all interest groups.

Another possible drawback: the committee might misunderstand its purpose and limitations and take off on a tangent.

Suggestions: Provide written guidelines on goals, purposes and procedures to keep the committee on track. Indicate whether the committee is expected to draft goals, provide input to a goal-writing process, or assess goals drafted by the professional staff and whether the board is seeking information, advice or both.

Also clarify the advisory nature of the committee's role (its job is to make recommendations, not decisions, because the board must eventually be satisfied that its mission and goals represent the entire community).

Make the committee representative of the community

racially, socially, economically and politically. Avoid choosing those who harbor a one-issue agenda. Try to impanel constructive critics, however, in order to avoid a "rubber stamp" outcome.

Encourage relevant discussion by providing members with background information, speakers, films, and other resources. Encourage brainstorming in small groups to generate and refine ideas.

Because the committee's primary function is to help set the district and community on a common mission, then the community must know what is going on. Citizens need to know about the nature of the committee's discussions, staff evaluation of its ideas and proposals, and any final outcome. Keeping the process under wraps only obscures the purpose—that real sense of mission your district is trying to develop. Use whatever communication methods are available to get the community thinking and talking about the mission and goals of the school district.

Surveys

A community survey or poll will suit your purpose if you want to gather facts about people, bring ideas to the surface or evaluate attitudes.

Strengths: If you want to give everyone a chance to "put in their two cents worth," or wish to gather a large amount of data, a survey enables you to involve large numbers of people. Also, a survey can produce findings more quickly than a committee can.

In general, surveys can be useful in identifying issues, but more face-to-face probing may be necessary to really understand how people feel about those issues.

Weaknesses: Surveys rarely provide final answers; they provide insights that demand interpretation. As a consequence, it's a device that is subject to misuse and abuse. (Using a survey to get the answers you want

may make you feel better but it won't lead to understanding.)

Moreover, people responding to surveys possess varying degrees of interest and knowledge regarding schools. Thus, a taxpayer who has no knowledge of the cost factors involved may express support for a computer in every classroom—and then scream bloody-murder if the board asks for money to buy the computers! Only a skilled pollster can use surveys to predict public reaction, and even the skilled often get it wrong.

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of surveys is the knowledge required to design a survey to meet a particular purpose, write the questions, draw a proper sample, and design an effective method for getting people to respond.

Suggestions: Before using a survey, decide its purpose. Do you want to gather facts about who people are (i.e., age, race, occupation) or probe to find out what is bothering people most about their schools or find out how people rank various priorities for their schools?

The second task is to decide who you need survey and whether you want to reach all of those people or just a cross-section of them. You may want to hear only from parents on some issue, for example, or from senior citizens, or from the business community, or some other segment of the total community.

The larger the group you want to hear from, the more likely you should choose to survey a sampling rather than all of the members of that group. Effective sampling is crucial because survey results will be inaccurate if you use a poor sampling method.

How questions are worded is also important in making the survey questions serve your purposes and to obtain valid responses. Writing the questions fairly is more difficult than choosing a sample.

So if your staff does not include survey professionals

skilled at drafting questionnaires, get consultants to help or assign employees to study the basics of survey design.

Distribution is crucial, too. How it's accomplished can greatly influence how many questionnaires are filled out and returned. Experts advise face-to-face surveys, with strangers conducting the interviews. Another good approach is to invite respondents to a convenient place (such as a school gym or auditorium) to complete a questionnaire. Most people like this because it implies anonymity.

A third option, mail distribution, requires follow-up phone calls and letters if you want good return rates. Otherwise expect a 20 or 30 percent return, and results skewed in favor of the views of the most conscientious citizens—or those with the strongest feelings (pro or con) about the schools.

Focus groups

Focus groups enable you to test public reaction (such as to staff-written goals) and to probe for what people view as good or bad. The object of a focus group is to gauge the direction of thinking in the community about a given issue or topic and determine whether there is a common thread to the responses that can give you a definite sense of direction or help you make a decision. The results are typically qualitative rather than quantitative.

Strengths: Focus groups provide a structured way to explore how small groups of people feel or how they think or react. They yield directional advice instead of the measurable, statistically valid data you can get from a survey. And they differ from citizen's committees in that they are purely for gathering information as opposed to working on projects, such as developing recommendations.

Focus groups may be used to hear people's views on any topic that is important to them—but they are more commonly used to address specific issues. They may tap existing groups (e.g., high school parents or local merchants) or hand-picked groups that are broadly representative of the community.

Weaknesses: The focus group has two possible weaknesses. One is the limited number of people who can be involved except by convening a large number of such groups. The biggest weakness may be the need for a skilled facilitator who can learn what needs to be learned from the group and clearly report that information.

Suggestions: How a focus group is organized can vary from a highly-structured, video-taped session to a very informal "town meeting" kind of get-together.

It is essential that the moderator of the focus group be effective at facilitating an unbiased, relaxed discussion. Here are some additional suggestions from Jeanne Magmer, a past president of the National School Public Relations Association:

- Limit membership of each focus group to about ten people. Larger groups don't allow everyone a chance to talk. To increase the number of people involved, increase the number of focus groups you use.
- Limit session length to one hour or so and the number of questions under consideration to three or four.
- Ask only open-ended questions. You might ask what the district does well, then ask what problems the district faces that most need to be addressed. Ask the group to consider these questions as a starting point or loose guide to the discussion. You want to begin on a positive note to place problems and the discussion in perspective. However, the best insights and ideas can only spring from a loose, lively session.

• Be sure you know who is going to compile and interpret the findings from the focus groups—and how that information is going to be put to use. (Will the information be used by the board, by an internal staff committee, by a citizens committee?)

Regardless of which opinion-gathering method you use, the keys to success are (a) make the entire process as public as possible and (b) check the results with board, staff and community to be sure everyone buys into it. Make modifications necessary to get consensus—hopefully enthusiastic consensus.

Delegation and decision making

Good decisions are not made in a vacuum. No matter who makes it, almost every decision involves:

- a set of facts known better to some people than to others;
- implications for people who are not immediately involved;
- organizational principles or policies that must be honored;
- organizational culture, which may or may not be open to change.

Most decisions require input from someone who has the facts, advice from someone knowledgeable about pertinent policies or principles, and communication with people who must implement the decision or who are otherwise affected.

While bad decisions may generate a great deal of controversy, of far more importance to organizational climate and effectiveness is the question of decision making *protocol*. Uncertainty and dissatisfaction over who is supposed to make which decisions are the sources of far more morale problems and other organizational weaknesses than any number of just plain bad decisions.

Exhibit B displays the wide range of decision making possibilities in any school district, including who makes the decision, who is consulted before the decision is made, and who is informed after the decision is made.

EXHIBIT B—THE ELEMENTS OF A DECISION

In an organization as complex as a school system—even a small system—decisions are made by many different people in many different ways. The individual "culture" of each school system determines who makes which decisions and how they go about it. Here are the possibilities:

1. The community makes the decision by referendum based on the advice of the school board.
2. The school board makes the decision—
   a. based on community sentiment, and/or
   b. based on advice of the superintendent, or
   c. based on the collective knowledge of its members.

   and reports its decision—
   a. to the community, and/or
   b. to the superintendent and staff, or
   c. to only those persons involved or affected.
3. The superintendent makes the decision—
   a. based on advice of the school board, and/or
   b. based on advice of principals and other staff, or
   c. based on personal knowledge.

   and reports the decision—
   a. to the school board, and/or
   b. to the principals and other staff, or
   c. to only those persons involved or affected.
4. The principal makes the decision—
   a. based on advice of the superintendent, and/or
   b. based on advice of teachers and other staff or students, or
   c. based on personal knowledge.

   and reports the decision—
   a. to the superintendent, and/or
   b. to teachers and other staff or students and parents, or
   c. to only those persons involved or affected.
5. The teacher makes the decision—
   a. based on advice of the principal, and/or
   b. based on advice of students or parents, or
   c. based on personal knowledge.

   and reports the decision—
   a. to the principal, and/or
   b. to students and parents, or
   c. to only those persons involved or affected.

The impact of poor decision making

Poor decision making protocol reveals itself in at least two different ways.

1. Decisions are not made; therefore, nothing gets done. In some organizations, people bring all decisions to the supervisor, including those the supervisor clearly expects them to make on their own. This may reflect a lack of clearly-understood organizational principles, policies or values that employees can use for guidance in making decisions.

In other organizations, it is not clear who is expected to make which decisions. Or, someone near the top is hoarding decision making authority. Or, someone near the top second-guesses the decisions of subordinates, thereby discouraging anyone from making a decision.

2. Too many decisions are made, with different people deciding the same issues in different ways. Confusion reigns. Nothing gets done or the organization operates at cross purposes.

In some organizations, people assume authority they do not really have. Lines of authority are unclear and the chain of command is not working; therefore, no one is held responsible for violating organizational principles, policies or values.

In other organizations, leaders fail to establish and communicate clear principles, policies or values by which decisions are to be judged and performance evaluated.

The effects of indecision and the effects of too many conflicting and confusing decisions are the same—losses in morale, losses in productivity, losses in performance. Employees simply cannot function effectively in such an environment.

The impact of good decision making

Sound decisions are probably being made at all levels

of your district organization—from the boardroom to the classroom—if:

- decisions are being made by people who know the most about the facts involved and the ramifications of the options;
- decision makers reflect organizational principles, policies or values—by checking with the next higher level of authority when necessary;
- the person making a decision can be held accountable by an immediate superior for adherence to organizational principles, policies and values;
- decision makers check with superiors or subordinates, as appropriate, either before or after making a decision, as appropriate, so that a tough or controversial decision takes no one by surprise;
- people who must implement the decision are given the information they need to understand what is expected.

How to encourage good decision making

To encourage effective decisions leading to school improvement, a school board must:

1. Establish goals for the schools as well as basic principles and values that all employees are expected to internalize and embrace in their everyday actions. The school district's basic "value system" must be continuously and vigorously communicated by the words and deeds of the board and administration.

2. Establish measures for assessing results and performance. Ensure that educational goals are being pursued and that the district's value system is, in fact, guiding the actions of everyone.

3. Multiply power by sharing it. Do not hoard power or use threats to get results. Empower people to

do their jobs within the constraints of school district goals and values. Insist upon leadership from teachers as well as administrators by delegating authority. Refuse to make decisions that you want others in the organization to make. But freely clarify board goals, principles and values to guide your decision makers.

4. Encourage the superintendent and others in the chain of command to see that decisions are made at appropriate levels in the organization. The school board can send a strong message by (a) refusing to make decisions that need to be made elsewhere in the organization and (b) consistently promoting the principles of delegation and responsibility.

School boards and their superintendents are encouraged to jointly take part in the two exercises that are provided on the following pages. **Exercise One** will help members of the school board develop an appreciation for the many different decisions that must be made in any school district. **Exercise Two** will help the board and superintendent reach agreement on how to handle the various decisions that need to be made at the district level.

EXERCISE ONE
Who Should Decide and Be Held Accountable?

This exercise is designed to spark discussion among members of the school board regarding the delegation of decision-making authority.

Here are five levels of decisions, A through E, typically made in any school district:

A. The school board should take official action, based on the collective knowledge of its members.

B. The school board should take official action on the recommendations of the superintendent.

C. The superintendent should decide (usually with advice from principals and faculty).

D. The principal should decide (usually with advice from the faculty).

E. Teachers should decide for themselves.

In the space next to each decision below, insert the letter of the response you choose from above. Then discuss your choice with board colleagues and arrive at a board consensus.

Your Choice		Board's Choice	
____	1.	____	The amount of time that each third-grade teacher devotes to the teaching of arithmetic.
____	2.	____	Methods used to teach arithmetic.
____	3.	____	Establish qualifications desired in hiring a new third-grade teacher.
____	4.	____	Selection of a new third-grade teacher from a pool of applicants.
____	5.	____	Establish qualifications desired in hiring a new superintendent.
____	6.	____	Whether to renew the contract of a first-year teacher.
____	7.	____	Selection of new textbooks for high school biology.
____	8.	____	How money budgeted for teaching supplies is allocated to various items to be purchased.
____	9.	____	Standards by which the "educational climate" in each school should be evaluated.
____	10.	____	Whether to place a high priority on reducing the high school drop-out rate.
____	11.	____	Whether to seek a tax rate increase by referendum.

EXERCISE TWO—Whose Decision? Getting the Board and Superintendent to Agree

Serious disagreements and unhappiness result when members of the school board and the superintendent do not agree on who should make a decision and who should be informed about it. Most boards attempt to avoid this situation by clarifying—in their written policies—which decisions the superintendent is expected to make and which decisions should be brought to the board for action.

New members coming on the board, however, may not understand or agree with existing policies/practices. Moreover, boards need to ask themselves whether they are making too many *operational* decisions, thereby relieving the professional staff of responsibility for those decisions. Conversely, who establishes basic principles, goals and policies of the district? The board? The superintendent? No one?

This exercise will reveal whether the superintendent and members of the board share common perceptions of who should make which types of decisions. There probably will be differences of opinion—in which case, the board and superintendent need to share the reasons for their views. It is essential for the board and superintendent to reach agreement.

FIVE WAYS TO HANDLE A DECISION

For the school board and superintendent, there are at least five ways that a decision can be made. Those five ways are listed here, A through E:

A. The administration should make this routine decision and not bother communicating with the school board.

B. The administration should make this decision, but inform the board about it *after* the decision is made.

C. The administration should make this decision, but should get the school board's thinking *before* the decision is made.

D. The school board is required by law to take final action on this decision; however, in nearly all cases, the board should respect the judgement of the superintendent, who will be held accountable.

E. The school board must make this decision and accept responsibility for it (although the board may expect information and/or a recommendation from the superintendent).

In the first column below, indicate which one of the five ways you believe is most appropriate for each decision. Then ask your superintendent which one of the five ways seems most appropriate to him or her. Finally, all members of the board and the superintendent should

share and discuss their perceptions—and hopefully arrive at an agreement that all can live with.

Your Choice	Supt.'s Choice	Final Consensus	
_____	_____	_____	1. Close school at noon because of heavy snowfall.
_____	_____	_____	2. Grant a teacher's request for released time to attend a curriculum workshop.
_____	_____	_____	3. Borrow against next year's property tax revenue to avoid cutting programs and staff.
_____	_____	_____	4. Adopt standards for evaluating progress of schools toward performance goals.
_____	_____	_____	5. Authorize distribution of a student newspaper at various times and places on the high school campus.
_____	_____	_____	6. Interview finalists and select a new chief custodian.
_____	_____	_____	7. Evaluate performance and decide whether to re-employ a first-year teacher.
_____	_____	_____	8. Review and select new biology textbooks.
_____	_____	_____	9. _____ _____
_____	_____	_____	10. _____ _____
_____	_____	_____	11. _____ _____
_____	_____	_____	12. _____ _____

Accountability—monitoring and assessing performance

If responsibility for doing something goes hand in hand with the authority required to do it, then accountability is the reverse side of delegated power. Responsible school boards exercise their powers through the superintendent by delegating authority—but they insist on seeing evidence that their powers are being properly exercised and evidence that the schools are doing what they are supposed to do. To this end, responsible school boards regularly evaluate the performance of the superintendent and examine appropriate measures of school district performance and improvement.

Evaluating the superintendent

Because different superintendencies involve different school board priorities, each board and superintendent must agree on what areas of performance are appropriate for board evaluation. Ideally, the focus in all districts would be on the leadership that the superintendent provides in achieving the district's educational mission. However, many superintendents are burdened with numerous duties unrelated to leadership. Regardless of how a superintendent's job is defined, however, the superintendent must know (a) what the board expects and (b) how board members, collectively and individually, feel about the way he is doing his job. *No superintendent or any other employee should be held to account for a remediable problem without warning and ample opportunity to improve.*

Monitoring district performance

A school board cannot have genuine confidence in the administration without a clear understanding of the district's strengths and weaknesses and what is being done to improve. A school board should expect the superintendent to provide frequent evidence of how the school district stacks up in various respects and, more important, what is being done to pursue district goals. Essential matters on which the board should receive information include:

1. **Student performance**—including academic achievement and growth, drop-out and absenteeism rates, graduation rates, extra-curricular participation, disciplinary rates, and other information reflecting the board's priorities;

2. **School and community climate**—including the attitudes of teachers and parents regarding the schools and the feelings of students;

3. **Financial status**—including current income and expense reports, balance sheets that reflect the district's fiscal health, multi-year projections, and similar information necessary to maintain financial accountability.

Most accountability information must be viewed over time and must be viewed in the broad context of community demographics and financial and staff resources. Gathering and analyzing data is both time consuming and complex. Therefore, members of the board must develop a common set of expectations for the superintendent to fill. The board also should be selective, keeping in mind that the aim is to assess results in achieving the kind of schools it wants.

The Board of Education and Superintendent at Minooka Elementary District 201 have adopted and expanded upon many of the concepts set forth in *Effective School Through Effective Management.* In assessing

strengths and weakness of their schools, the Minooka board and administration look at more than student test scores, attitude surveys, and financial reports. They also pay attention to issues related to administrative leadership and school climate—many of which can be assessed only subjectively.

Just because something cannot be measured precisely doesn't mean it is unimportant. Paying attention to some of these subjective considerations sends the message to students, staff and parents that those considerations are important.

Here are 20 factors that the board and administration at Minooka agreed they must evaluate on a regular basis—in addition to student performance and other more objective measures:

1. Do principals provide effective supervision?

2. How involved are teachers in developing and evaluating curriculum and in selecting textbooks?

3. How involved is the school board in reviewing school practices and setting realistic goals for school improvement?

4. How involved are all staff members in making decisions?

5. Do all staff members contribute ideas for needs before budgets are developed?

6. Is staff development given adequate attention? How effective is it?

7. Do certificated staff show interest in professional writing?

8. Are teachers initiating research in their classrooms and collecting data?

9. Do teachers ask questions about research findings in relation to effective teaching practices?

10. Are climate surveys conducted, monitored and ex-

plored?

11. Are teachers engaged in coaching peers?

12. Are teachers sharing information openly at faculty meetings?

13. How involved are staff members in extra-curricular activities?

14. Do committees meet regularly to plan, review, and evaluate district progress?

15. How clearly is the district's mission understood and how widely addressed?

16. Do surveys indicate adequate levels of job satisfaction and community support?

17. How willing are staff members to take risks in exploring new ideas?

18. Are job targets being set at all levels in the organization?

19. Are staff members becoming organizationally focused rather than self-focused?

20. Is the decision making process changing from "top-down" to a combination of committees and collaboration?

Many of these factors represent characteristics of effective schools as identified by a large body of research. However, this list is simply representative and not necessarily appropriate for any other district. The board, administration and faculty in each community must ask themselves: What is important to us and how do we monitor it?

Exercise Three will help your school board answer this question.

EXERCISE THREE—What Information Do We Need or Want?

One of the superintendent's responsibilities is to provide the board of education with information. In your opinion, what are the FIVE most important kinds of information that a board should expect from its superintendent?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Do members of your school board generally agree on the kinds of information they expect from the superintendent?

What are the consequences if different board members want different things?

Be able to explain why the information you expect is important to you in your role as a school board member. For example:

_____ Essential to making informed school board decisions.

_____ Need to monitor/evaluate district performance.

_____ Constituents expect me to have answers.

A school board must agree on the kinds of information it expects from the superintendent. What any given board expects will reflect its priorities and how the board views or defines its role. **However, a board that delegates authority to the superintendent to pursue broadly defined values and goals will need information to monitor adherence to those values and progress toward those goals.**

See if your school board can reach agreement on the most important kinds of information that it will expect from the superintendent and list them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Other books from IASB

These books are available from the Illinois Association of School Boards, 1209 South Fifth Street, Springfield, Illinois 62703; Telephone: 217 / 528-9688, ext. 108.

Successful School Board Meetings—By Stuart A. Anderson. This comprehensive guide book covers common legal requirements and practical rules for school board meetings, with the major emphasis on dealing with conflict, improving communications, and making decisions. Includes 16 sample policies plus an appendix with a variety of helpful tools. National edition, $9; special Illinois edition, $9 (IASB members, $6).

Planned Appraisal of the Superintendent—By R.R. Booth and G.R. Glaub. This handbook examines the legal and practical aspects of the board-superintendent relationship and the ways in which various types of boards relate to their superintendents. It describes different evaluation methods and explains how to develop a performance appraisal system. Also contains sample forms, policies and procedures. $7 (IASB members, $4).

Improving School Performance—By Fredric H. Genck, the co-author of *Effective Schools Through Effective Management*. Reports on school districts that have successfully reversed the decline in student performance and public confidence through "management for results." It addresses the importance of developing an effective management team, planning, the use of surveys and student performance data, teacher evaluation and development, and administrative evaluation and much more. Published by Praeger Publishers, 1983, 300 pages, hardbound, $29.95.

New Horizons for Local School Leaders: Creating Schools for the Twenty-First Century—Edited by Jessica C. Billings. We know a lot about the future—enough to create schools to meet the needs of children who will be living out their lives in the twenty-first century. This collection of articles is based on presentations by outstanding thinkers who addressed a symposium on Education for the Twenty-First Century. Subjects include various views of technology and the future; teaching reading, thinking skills, and values; educating teachers; developing a global vision in students; and others. Includes sources of additional information. $12 (IASB members, $9).

The Authors

FREDRIC H. GENCK is Managing Director of the Institute for Public Management, in Chicago. Before turning his attention to public administration in the early 1970's, Mr. Genck worked with businesses, governments and universities in both the United States and Europe. Since co-authoring Effective Schools Through Effective Management in 1978, he has served as a consultant to some 200 school districts, served two terms as a school board member in Lake Forest School District 67, and produced a number of publications on school management, including Improving School Performance (Praeger, 1983) and the Northwestern University School Management Course Case Study Book (1982).

ALLEN J. KLINGENBERG is Superintendent of School District 67, Lake Forest, Illinois. Virtually all of the innovative techniques for measuring school performance and applying the results of those measurements to improve learning were first put into practice in District 67 prior to 1978. Since the publication of Effective Schools Through Effective Management that year, all five eligible schools in District 67 have received national recognition for excellence and the district has become a mecca for school policy makers and managers from all over the nation. Dr. Klingenberg has been selected as Illinois Superintendent of the Year and as one of Executive Educator magazine's top 100 school administrators.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ISBN 1-880331-00-4